THIS SINGING WORLD

Modern Poems for Young People

Selected by

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

With illustrations by

FLORENCE WYMAN IVINS

$3.75

THIS SINGING WORLD

Edited by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

EDITOR OF "MODERN AMERICAN POETRY," "MODERN BRITISH POETRY"

Illustrated by FLORENCE WYMAN IVINS

"In *This Singing World*, a collection of poems for young people between the ages of nine and sixteen, Louis Untermeyer has done his best; and that is saying a great deal.

"The volume is divided into twenty sections, with such intriguing titles as 'Breath of the Earth,' 'Stars to Hitch To,' and 'Fables in Foolscap.' Whether a child is of the indoor or outdoor type, there are poems here which will catch his fancy, which he will learn and love. Mr. Untermeyer has chosen the selection from a large field of poems, ranging all the way from Poe's 'To Helen' to Gelett Burgess' 'Nonsense Rhymes,' the latter including the famous purple cow quatrain. There are the fun-poking gems and exquisite witticisms of Lewis Carroll, Oliver Herford, Guy Wetmore Carryl, Gelett Burgess, and Hilaire Belloc; there are also several sections devoted to some of the world's most beautiful lyrics by the Rossettis, Browning, Tennyson, Stevenson, Francis Thompson, Edna Millay, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Emily Dickinson, and a score of others. We are given the splendid opportunity to explore the magical realm of fairy lore with Walter de la Mare, Rose Fyleman, Robert Graves, and Laura Benet, for guides. For the boy and the girl who like the out-of-doors there are lyrics and ballades by Kipling and Masefield, Richard Hovey and Walt Whitman, even a few American cowboy songs.

"Mr. Untermeyer has given free rein to his most delightful taste, and the result is a treasure box filled with pure gold."—*Christian Science Monitor.*

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CHALLENGE
THE NEW ADAM
THESE TIMES

Parodies

INCLUDING HORACE
— AND OTHER POETS
HEAVENS
COLLECTED PARODIES

Tales

CHIP: MY LIFE AND TIMES
THE DONKEY OF GOD
THE FAT OF THE CAT
AND OTHER STORIES
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MODERN BRITISH POETRY
THIS SINGING WORLD
YESTERDAY AND TODAY
POEMS OF HEINRICH HEINE

THIS SINGING WORLD

AN ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN POETRY
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Collected and Edited by
LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Illustrations by
FLORENCE WYMAN IVINS

New York
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

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OF
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
AND ESPECIALLY
ANNIE CARROLL MOORE
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FRANCES CLARKE

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE READER HIMSELF (OR HERSELF)

You won't like all of these poems. Even though I'm not sure just who you are, you couldn't possibly care for every single one of them. Nobody could. There are, in this remarkable world, as many different tastes as there are flavors. And that is why I have included not only so many poems but so many kinds of poems. Perhaps you're especially fond of music. Then you will read many of these verses for the sheer sound of them: for the throb and beat of the rhymes, for the little, tinkling feet that tap their toes to an even measure, for the tunes that shape themselves as the words sing out with even more melody than meaning. Perhaps — am I right? — you are something of a dreamer. You can see castles in the clouds, pictures in the dying fire; you know that the wayside fern often conceals a frightened fairy and that every twilight has its own pet phantom. You will find them all here — friendly unicorns, babies with fairy-laughter, dinkey-birds in amfalula trees, enchanted shirts and singing mermaids — all in a world of phantasy whose colors are lovelier and livelier than those the eye can see. Perhaps you are a boy who, with one eye on your homework and the other on the batting averages, has always considered poetry a sort of childish sugar-candy — "a sentimental lollipop" (I've heard you say it!) "for silly girls." Now, wait a moment. Read the ballads of Rudyard Kipling (You have? Well, read them again!), listen to the rousing voices in the

Heroic Heart, spend a few minutes with the writers who will help you discover the everyday magic in Common Things. Perhaps, however, you don't like to be talked to quite so seriously — at least, not all the time. Well, nobody can prevent you turning to the hop-skip-and-a-leap of the Laughing Legends, or the galloping nonsense in Rhyme without Reason. Perhaps — terrible thought! — you don't like to read at all, but prefer romping and swinging along in the pure joy of out-of-doors. Don't think you can escape so easily! See if you don't feel the wind on your forehead and the blood racing in your veins when you hear the marches in the section called Open Roads and the breezy trumpets blowing out of the Breath of the Earth.

But whatever else you may look for (and, I hope, find), I think you will take pleasure not only in the sounds and the stories, but in the words themselves. The men and women who wrote the pieces in this book — in fact, all poets who ever lived — have enjoyed finding words to carry their feelings to others, and people have always enjoyed following the words. To-day there seem to be more people who wish to shape their thoughts into many different arrangements of words, and more people who share their enjoyment. Most of the poems in this book were written by living poets — and so it is *this* singing world — your world as well as theirs — that is between these covers. Sometimes I think the poems are as much alive as the persons who wrote them — just as Oliver Twist and Robinson Crusoe and Hamlet and D'Artagnan and Danny Deever and Gulliver are as real as any man we know. Thomas Carlyle once said that every fine poem was at bottom, a kind of biography, the life of a man — "and," he went on, "it may also be said, there is no life

of man but is a heroic poem of some sort, rhymed or unrhymed."

And that, I suppose, is the Moral of this Introduction. (Every introduction, you know, must have one!) If we want to make it simpler, all these sentences could be boiled down to a four-word problem in arithmetic:

Poetry + *People* = *Education* + *Enjoyment*

At any rate, they are four good words. They seem, like things equal to the same thing, equal to each other. They are, everywhere, and especially in this book, closely related. Let them stand together.

L. U.

New York City

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A FOREWORD

Child, do not throw this book about;
  Refrain from the unholy pleasure
Of cutting all the pictures out!
  Preserve it as your chiefest treasure.

Child, have you never heard it said
  That you are heir to all the ages?
Why, then, your hands were never made
  To tear these beautiful thick pages!

Your little hands were made to take
  The better things and leave the worse ones.
They also may be used to shake
  The Massive Paws of Elder Persons.

And when your prayers complete the day,
  Darling, your little tiny hands
Were also made, I think, to pray
  For men that lose their fairylands.

Hilaire Belloc

SONGS OF AWAKENING

SONGS OF AWAKENING

"THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING"

(*From "Pippa Passes"*)

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven —
All's right with the world.

Robert Browning

DAWN AND DARK

God with His million cares
Went to the left or right,
Leaving our world; and the day
Grew night.

Back from a sphere He came
Over a starry lawn,
Looked at our world; and the dark
Grew dawn.

Norman Gale

BALLADE OF SPRING

There's a noise of coming, going,
Budding, waking, vast and still.
Hark, the echoes are yo-hoing.

Loud and sweet from vale and hill.
Do you hear it? With a will,
In a grandiose lilt and swing,
Nature's voices shout and trill. . . .
'Tis the symphony of Spring!

Rains are singing, clouds are flowing,
Ocean thunders, croons the rill,
And the West his clarion's blowing.
And the sparrow tunes his quill,
And the thrush is fluting shrill,
And the skylark's on the wing,
And the merles[1] their hautboys[2] fill —
'Tis the symphony of Spring!

Lambs are bleating, steers are lowing,
Brisk and rhythmic clacks the mill,
Kapellmeister[3] April, glowing
And superb with glee and skill,
Comes, his orchestra to drill
In a music that will ring
Till the grey world yearn and thrill.
'Tis the symphony of Spring!

ENVOY

Princes, though your blood be chill,
Here's shall make you leap and fling,
Fling and leap like Jack and Jill!
'Tis the symphony of Spring! *W. E. Henley*

[1] *Merle:* the European blackbird.
[2] *Hautboy:* the oboe, a wind-instrument.
[3] *Kapellmeister:* the leader of the orchestra.

SPRING SONG[1]

I love daffodils.
I love Narcissus when he bends his head.
I can hardly keep March and Spring and Sunday and
daffodils
Out of my rhyme of song.
Do you know anything about the spring
When it comes again?
God knows about it while winter is lasting.
Flowers bring him power in the spring,
And birds bring it and children.
He is sometimes sad and alone
Up there in the sky trying to keep his worlds happy.
I bring him songs
When he is in his sadness, and weary.
I tell him how I used to wander out
To study stars and the moon he made,
And flowers in the dark of the wood.
I keep reminding him about his flowers he has forgotten,
And that snowdrops are up.
What can I say to make him listen?
"God," I say,
"Don't you care!
Nobody must be sad or sorry
In the spring-time of flowers."

Hilda Conkling
(Written at the age of six)

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APRIL [1]

The roofs are shining from the rain,
  The sparrows twitter as they fly,
And with a windy April grace
  The little clouds go by.

Yet the back-yards are bare and brown
  With only one unchanging tree —
I could not be so sure of Spring
  Save that it sings in me.

Sara Teasdale

APRIL WINDS

In Spring the day is early
  And wakes a rosy world,
Where all the twigs are pearly
  And every bud's uncurled.
The birds are up and singing
  Before they can be seen, —
And April winds are winging
  Their way to make earth green.

In Spring the sun grows pleasant,
  To prove that he is fond,
He scatters for a present
  Gold pieces in each pond.
He sets the bell-flowers ringing
  With perfumed melodies, —
And April winds run swinging
  Among the startled trees.

[1] From *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale. Copyright, 1915, by The Macmillan Company.

In Spring the night is starry;
  Sleep taps upon the door
And not a heart is sorry
  Though daylight is no more;
It knows the night is bringing
  Dreams for another day,—
And April winds are singing
  The silent hours away.

Michael Lewis

SONG

April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then, the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears,
April, that mine ears
Like a lover greetest,
If I tell thee, sweetest,
All my hopes and fears.
April, April,
Laugh thy golden laughter,
But, the moment after,
Weep thy golden tears!

William Watson

SUNRISE

The east is yellow as a daffodil.
Three steeples — three stark swarthy arms — are thrust
Up from the town. The gnarlèd poplars thrill
Down the long street in some keen salty gust —
Straight from the sea and all the sailing ships —

Turn white, black, white again, with noises sweet
And swift. Back to the night the last star slips.
High up the air is motionless, a sheet
Of light. The east grows yellower apace,
And trembles: then, once more, and suddenly,
The salt wind blows, and in that moment's space
Flame roofs, and poplar-tops, and steeples three;
From out the mist that wraps the river-ways,
The little boats, like torches, start ablaze.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE WAKERS

The joyous morning ran and kissed the grass
And drew his fingers through her sleeping hair,
  And cried, " Before thy flowers are well awake
  Rise, and the lingering darkness from thee shake.

" Before the daisy and the sorrel buy
Their brightness back from that close-folding night,
  Come, and the shadows from thy bosom shake,
  Awake from thy thick sleep, awake, awake! "

Then the grass of that mounded meadow stirred
Above the Roman bones that may not stir
  Though joyous morning whispered, shouted, sang:
  The grass stirred as that happy music rang.

O, what a wondrous rustling everywhere!
The steady shadows shook and thinned and died,
  The shining grass flashed brightness back for brightness,
  And sleep was gone, and there was heavenly lightness.

As if she had found wings, light as the wind,
The grass flew, bent with the wind, from east to west,

Chased by one wild grey cloud, and flashing all
Her dews for happiness to hear morning call. . . .

But even as I stepped out the brightness dimmed,
I saw the fading edge of all delight.
The sober morning waked the drowsy herds,
And there was the old scolding of the birds.

John Freeman

WHO CALLS?

"Listen, children, listen, won't you come into the night?
The stars have set their candle gleam, the moon her lanthorn light.
I'm piping little tunes for you to catch your dancing feet.
There's glory in the heavens, but there's magic in the street.
There's jesting here and carnival: the cost of a balloon
Is an ancient rhyme said backwards, and a wish upon the moon.
The city walls and city streets! — you shall make of these
As fair a thing as country roads and blossomy apple trees."

"What watchman calls us in the night, and plays a little tune
That turns our tongues to talking now of April, May and June?
Who bids us come with nimble feet and snapping finger tips?"

"I am the Spring, the Spring, the Spring with laughter on my lips."

Frances Clarke

BREATH OF THE EARTH

BREATH OF THE EARTH

PRELUDE

Still south I went and west and south again,
  Through Wicklow from the morning till the night,
And far from cities and the sights of men,
  Lived with the sunshine and the moon's delight.

I knew the stars, the flowers, and the birds,
  The grey and wintry sides of many glens,
And did but half remember human words,
  In converse with the mountains, moors and fens.

J. M. Synge

GOD'S WORLD

O World, I cannot hold thee close enough!
    Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
    Thy mists that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,
    But never knew I this;
    Here such a passion is
As stretcheth me apart. Lord, I do fear
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year.
My soul is all but out of me, — let fall
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

NATURE'S FRIEND

Say what you like,
  All things love me!
I pick no flowers —
  That wins the Bee.

The Summer's Moths
  Think my hand one —
To touch their wings —
  With Wind and Sun.

The garden Mouse
  Comes near to play;
Indeed, he turns
  His eyes away.

The Wren knows well
  I rob no nest;
When I look in,
  She still will rest.

The hedge stops Cows,
  Or they would come
After my voice
  Right to my home.

The Horse can tell,
  Straight from my lip,
My hand could not
  Hold any whip.

Say what you like
  All things love me!
Horse, Cow, and Mouse,
  Bird, Moth and Bee.

W. H. Davies

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
  The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
  Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
  The wind is passing by.

Christina Georgiana Rossetti

BOATS SAIL ON THE RIVERS

Boats sail on the rivers,
  And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
  Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
  As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
  And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
  Is prettier far than these.

Christina Georgiana Rossetti

HEAT

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air —
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut through the heat —
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

"H. D."

STORM

You crash over the trees,
you crack the live branch —
the branch is white,
the green crushed,
each leaf is rent like split wood.

You burden the trees
with black drops,
you swirl and crash —
you have broken off a weighted leaf
in the wind,
it is hurled out,
whirls up and sinks,
a green stone.

"H. D."

THE STORM [1]

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the windows and the doors
As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.
On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

Emily Dickinson

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.

More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon the white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes;
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

Elinor Wylie

FIRST FROST

A sparkling sunset, oranged to gold,
Rings like a bell of sorrow told,
Across the night of whistling cold;
For now an arm swings near and far
The brittle lamp of every star.
The flowers grow in the garden pied
Velvet, imperial, laughing-eyed,
While on them all hovers a breath,
The whistling frost of silver death.
I grieve to see the wine-red crowd
And watch and watch them, tall and proud,
And tell them that tonight death comes,
Beating the stars like kettle drums.
For the last time I kiss their breasts,
The lovely golden fleeting guests,
Made sad to think on morning's shore

Their beauty will be nevermore.
I grieve to see them fall and die
Where kindled, burning, sparkling high
The stars make mirrors of the sky.
I bid them farewell in their sleep,
Wrapped now in snowy silver seas,
For they, immortal, will but leap
Like us, to a more marvelous peace.
And here I sit by them and view
The solid sky as white frost comes,
Knocking the winds to silver dew,
Beating the stars like kettle drums.

Edwin Curran

SONG OF SUMMER

Dis is gospel weathah sho' —
  Hills is sawt o' hazy.
Meddahs level ez a flo'
  Callin' to de lazy.
Sky all white wif streaks o' blue,
  Sunshine softly gleamin',
D'ain't no wuk hit's right to do,
  Nothin's right but dreamin'.

Dreamin' by a rivah side
  Wif de watahs glist'nin',
Feelin' good an' satisfied
  Ez you lay a-list'nin'
To the little nakid boys
  Splashin' in de watah,
Hollerin' fu' to spress deir joys
  Jes' lak youngsters ought to.

Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,
So't to hide an' view you;
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin' crows
Shoutin' hallelujah.
Peckahwood erpon de tree
Tappin' lak a hammah;
Jaybird chattin' wif a bee,
Tryin' to teach him grammah.

Breeze is blowin' wif perfume,
Jes' enough to tease you;
Hollyhocks is all in bloom,
Smellin' fu' to please you.
Go 'way, folks an' let me 'lone,
Times is gettin' dearah —
Summah's settin' on de th'one,
An' I'm a-layin' neah huh!

Paul Laurence Dunbar

SUMMER EVENING

The sandy cat by the Farmer's chair
Mews at his knee for dainty fare;
Old Rover in his moss-greened house
Mumbles a bone, and barks at a mouse;
In the dewy fields the cattle lie
Chewing the cud 'neath a fading sky;
Dobbin at manger pulls his hay:
Gone is another summer's day.

Walter De la Mare

NIGHT STUFF

Listen a while, the moon is a lovely woman, a lonely woman, lost in a silver dress, lost in a circus rider's silver dress.

Listen a while, the lake by night is a lonely woman, a lovely woman, circled with birches and pines mixing their green and white among stars shattered in spray clear nights.

I know the moon and the lake have twisted the roots under my heart the same as a lonely woman, a lovely woman, in a silver dress, in a circus rider's silver dress.

Carl Sandburg

HARVEST SUNSET

Red gold of pools,
Sunset furrows six o'clock,
And the farmer done in the fields
And the cows in the barns with bulging udders.

Take the cows and the farmer,
Take the barns and bulging udders.
Leave the red gold of pools
And sunset furrows six o'clock.
The farmer's wife is singing.
The farmer's boy is whistling.
I wash my hands in red gold of pools.

Carl Sandburg

EVENING WATERFALL

What was the name you called me? —
And why did you go so soon?

The crows lift their caw on the wind,
And the wind changed and was lonely.

The warblers cry their sleepy-songs
Across the valley gloaming,
Across the cattle-horns of early stars.

Feathers and people in the crotch of a treetop
Throw an evening waterfall of sleepy songs.

What was the name you called me? —
And why did you go so soon?

Carl Sandburg

FOG

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

Carl Sandburg

GLIMPSE IN AUTUMN

Ladies at a ball
  Are not so fine as these
  Richly brocaded trees
That decorate the fall.

They stand against a wall
  Of crisp October sky,
  Their plumèd heads held high,
Like ladies at a ball.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

AUTUMN

The music of the autumn winds sings low,
Down by the ruins of the painted hills,
Where death lies flaming with a marvelous glow,
Upon the ash of rose and daffodils.
But I can find no melancholy here,
To see the naked rocks and thinning trees;
Earth strips to grapple with the winter year:
I see her gnarled hills plan for victories!

I love the earth who goes to battle now,
To struggle with the wintry whipping storm
And bring the glorious spring out from the night.
I see earth's muscles bared, her battle brow,
And am not sad, but feel her marvelous charm
As splendidly she plunges in the fight.

Edwin Curran

AUTUMN [1]

The morns are meeker than they were,
The nuts are getting brown;
The berry's cheek is plumper,
The rose is out of town.

The maple wears a gayer scarf,
The field a scarlet gown.
Lest I should be old-fashioned,
I'll put a trinket on.

Emily Dickinson

HOME-COMING

When I stepped homeward to my hill
Dusk went before with quiet tread;
The bare laced branches of the trees
Were as a mist about its head.

Upon its leaf-brown breast, the rocks
Like great grey sheep lay silent-wise;
Between the birch trees' gleaming arms,
The faint stars trembled in the skies.

The white brook met me half-way up
And laughed as one that knew me well,
To whose more clear than crystal voice
The frost had joined a crystal spell.

The skies lay like pale-watered deep.
Dusk ran before me to its strand

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.

And cloudily leaned forth to touch
The moon's slow wonder with her hand.

Léonie Adams

THE GARDEN YEAR

January brings the snow,
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes, loud and shrill,
To stir the dancing daffodil.

April brings the primrose sweet,
Scatters daisies at our feet.

May brings flocks of pretty lambs
Skipping by their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,
Fills the children's hands with posies.

Hot July brings cooling showers
Apricots and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit;
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasant;
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast;
Then the leaves are whirling fast.

Chill December brings the sleet,
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

Sara Coleridge

"I AM HE THAT WALKS"

I am he that walks with the tender and growing Night,
I call to the earth and sea half-held by the Night.

Press close, bare-bosomed Night! Press close, magnetic, nourishing Night!
Night of south winds! Night of the large few stars!
Still, nodding night! Mad, naked, summer night.

Smile, O voluptuous, cool-breathed Earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!
Earth of departed sunset! Earth of the mountains, misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon, just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark, mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid grey of clouds, brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbowed earth! Rich, apple-blossomed earth!
Smile, for your lover comes!

Walt Whitman

SURGE OF THE SEA

PIRATES

SURGE OF THE SEA

THE SEA GYPSY

I am fevered with the sunset,
I am fretful with the bay,
For the wander-thirst is on me
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing,
With her topsails shot with fire,
And my heart has gone aboard her
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again to-morrow!
With the sunset I must be
Hull down on the trail of rapture
In the wonder of the Sea.

Richard Hovey

A WANDERER'S SONG

A wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels,
I am tired of brick and stone and rumbling wagon-wheels;
I hunger for the sea's edge, the limits of the land,
Where the wild old Atlantic is shouting on the sand.

Oh, I'll be going, leaving the noises of the street,
To where a lifting foresail-foot is yanking at the sheet;
To a windy, tossing anchorage where yawls and ketches[1] ride,
Oh, I'll be going, going, until I meet the tide.

And first I'll hear the sea-wind, the mewing of the gulls,
The clucking, sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls,

[1] *Yawls and ketches:* two-masted boats.

The songs at the capstan in the hooker warping out,
And then the heart of me'll know I'm there or thereabout.

Oh, I am tired of brick and stone, the heart of me is sick,
For windy green, unquiet sea, the realm of Moby Dick;
And I'll be going, going, from the roaring of the wheels,
For a wind's in the heart of me, a fire's in my heels.

John Masefield

THE SEA

(*From "The Triumph of Time"*)

I will go back to the great sweet mother,—
  Mother and lover of men, the Sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
  Close with her, kiss her, and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast.
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
  Set free my soul as thy soul is free!

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
  Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
  Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine,
  Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
  Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
  I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;

Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full of life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the rose-leaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy waves and thee;
Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
Clothed with the green, and crowned with the foam,
A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
A vein in the heart of the streams of the Sea.

A. C. Swinburne

FROM "SWIMMERS"

Oh, the swift plunge into the cool, green dark —
The windy waters rushing past me, through me;
Filled with a sense of some heroic lark,
Exulting in a vigor clean and roomy.
Swiftly I rose to meet the feline sea
That sprang upon me with a hundred claws,
And grappled, pulled me down and played with me.
Then, tense and breathless in the tightening pause
When one wave grows into a toppling acre,
I dived headlong into the foremost breaker;
Pitting against a cold and turbulent strife
The feverish intensity of life. . . .
Out of the foam I lurched and rode the wave,
Swimming, hand over hand, against the wind.
I felt the sea's vain pounding, and I grinned
Knowing I was its master, not its slave!

Oh, the proud total of those lusty hours —
The give-and-take of rough and vigorous tussles
With happy sinews and rejoicing muscles;
The knowledge of my own miraculous powers;
Feeling the force in one small body bent
To curb and tame this towering element. . . .

Louis Untermeyer

THE NOISE OF WATERS

All day I hear the noise of waters
Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is, when going
Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the waters'
Monotone.

The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing
Where I go.
I hear the noise of many waters
Far below.
All day, all night, I hear them flowing
To and fro.

James Joyce

OLD SHIPS

There is a memory stays upon old ships,
A weightless cargo in the musty hold, —
Of bright lagoons and prow-caressing lips,
Of stormy midnights, — and a tale untold.
They have remembered islands in the dawn,

And windy capes that tried their slender spars,
And tortuous channels where their keels have gone,
And calm blue nights of stillness and the stars.

Ah, never think that ships forget a shore,
Or bitter seas, or winds that made them wise;
There is a dream upon them, evermore;
And there be some who say that sunk ships rise
To seek familiar harbors in the night,
Blowing in mists, their spectral sails like light.

David Morton

BALLADE OF A SHIP

Down by the flash of the restless water
The dim White Ship like a white bird lay;
Laughing at life and the world they sought her,
And out she swung to the silvering bay.
Then off they flew on their roystering way,
And the keen moon fired the light foam flying
Up from the flood where the faint stars play,
And the bones of the brave in the wave are lying.

'Twas a king's fair son with a king's fair daughter,
And full three hundred beside, they say,—
Revelling on for the lone, cold slaughter
So soon to seize them and hide them for aye;
But they danced and they drank and their souls grew gay,
Nor ever they knew of a ghoul's eye spying
Their splendor a flickering phantom to stray
Where the bones of the brave in the wave are lying.

Through the mist of a drunken dream they brought her
(This wild white bird) for the sea-fiend's prey:
The pitiless reef in his hard clutch caught her,
And hurled her down where the dead men stay.
A torturing silence of wan dismay —
Shrieks and curses of mad souls dying —
Then down they sank to slumber and sway
Where the bones of the brave in the wave are lying.

ENVOY

Prince, do you sleep to the sound alway
Of the mournful surge and the sea-birds' crying? —
Or does love still shudder and steel still slay,
Where the bones of the brave in the wave are lying?

Edwin Arlington Robinson

OREAD

Whirl up, sea —
Whirl your pointed pines.
Splash your great pines
On our rocks.
Hurl your green over us —
Cover us with your pools of fir.

"H. D."

SEA CALL

My old love for the water has come back again —
I had forgotten its surging, so long, so long away;
Sapphire-blue in the sunlight and green-grey in the rain,
And the same waves cresting, and the same sharp spray;

There was left a wave in my heart when I went to the inland towns,
Something that moved and murmured in the days when I forgot;
Vivid flowers of the gardens or thick long grass of the downs —
What were the sweets of the summer days, where the calling waves were not?

My old love for the water has come back once more;
The wave of the deep draws full, and the wave in my heart lifts high;
This is my own old country and my own old shore . . .
And I cannot leave the water till the day I die.

Margaret Widdemer

HIGH-TIDE

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang, with rough joy on the shrinking sand.
Sprang — but were drawn back slowly,
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive;
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

OPEN ROADS

THE JOYS OF THE ROAD

Now the joys of the road are chiefly these:
A crimson touch on the hard-wood trees;

A vagrant's morning wide and blue,
In early fall, when the wind walks, too;

A shadowy highway cool and brown,
Alluring up and enticing down

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

The outward eye, the quiet will,
And the striding hart from hill to hill;

The tempter apple over the fence;
The cobweb bloom on the yellow quince;

The palish asters along the wood,
A lyric touch of the solitude;

An open hand, an easy shoe,
And a hope to make the day go through, —

Another to sleep with, and a third
To wake me up at the voice of a bird;

The resonant, far-listening morn,
And the hoarse whisper of the corn;

The crickets mourning their comrades lost,
In the night's retreat from the gathering frost;

(Or is it their slogan, plaintive and shrill,
As they beat on their corselets, valiant still?)

A hunger fit for the kings of the sea,
And a loaf of bread for Dickon and me;

A thirst like that of the Thirsty Sword,
And a jug of cider on the board;

An idle noon, a bubbling spring,
The sea in the pine-tops murmuring;

A scrap of gossip at the ferry;
A comrade neither glum nor merry,

Asking nothing, revealing naught,
But minting his words from a fund of thought,

A keeper of silence eloquent,
Needy, yet royally well content,

Of the mettled breed, yet abhorring strife,
And full of the mellow juice of life,

No fidget and no reformer, just
A calm observer of ought and must,

A lover of books, but a reader of man,
No cynic and no charlatan,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands,—

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

And O the joy that is never won,
But follows and follows the journeying sun,

By marsh and tide, by meadow and stream,
A will-o'-the-wind, a light-o'-dream,

Delusion afar, delight anear,
From morrow to morrow, from year to year,

A jack-o'-lantern, a fairy fire,
A dare, a bliss, and a desire!

The racy smell of the forest loam,
When the stealthy, sad-heart leaves go home;

(O leaves, O leaves, I am one with you,
Of the mould and the sun and the wind and the dew!)

The broad gold wake of the afternoon;
The silent fleck of the cold new moon;

The sound of the hollow sea's release
From stormy tumult to starry peace;

With only another league to wend;
And two brown arms at the journey's end!

These are the joys of the open road —
For him who travels without a load.

Bliss Carman

THE LONG ROAD

White in the moon the long road lies,
  The moon stands blank above;
White in the moon the long road lies
  That leads me from my love.

Still hangs the hedge without a gust,
  Still, still the shadows stay:
My feet upon the moonlit dust
  Pursue the ceaseless way.

The world is round, so travellers tell,
And straight though reach the track,
Trudge on, trudge on, 'twill all be well
The way will guide one back.

But ere the circle homeward hies
Far, far must it remove:
White in the moon the long road lies
That leads me from my love.

A. E. Housman

THE SONG OF THE UNGIRT RUNNERS

We swing ungirded hips,
And lightened are our eyes;
The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
We know not whom we trust
Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
And does not leave them warm.
Does the tearing tempest pause?
Do the tree-tops ask it why?
So we run without a cause
'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.

But the storm the water whips
And the wave howls to the skies.
The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

Charles Hamilton Sorley

THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine,
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.

"Will ye not come home, brother? ye have been long away,
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the may;
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain,—
Will ye not come home, brother, home to us again?

"The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run,
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun.
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again.

"Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the green wheat,
So will ye not come home, brother, and rest your tired feet?

I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for aching
eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries.

It's the white road westwards is the road I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart and
head,
To the violets and the warm hearts and the thrushes' song,
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I belong.

John Masefield

TO THE WINTER WIND

Wind of the winter, drive the ships home,
From tropic islands
Whirl the grey cloudrack,
Spatter the rocks with foam.

Blind wind of the night,
Raging, careering,
Shriek to me through the keyhole,
Shout to me down the chimney,
Whistle and moan through the pinewood out of sight.

Bring Christmas here,
The log on the hearth,
The cattle in stall.
Pile by the housedoor
The snowdrift, untroubled.
Put ice on the wall.

John Gould Fletcher

WANDER-THIRST

Beyond the East the sunrise, beyond the West the sea,
And East and West the wander-thirst that will not let me be;
It works in me like madness, dear, to bid me say good-bye;
For the seas call and the stars call, and oh! the call of the sky.

I know not where the white road runs, nor what the blue hills are,
But a man can have the Sun for friend, and for his guide a star;
And there's no end of voyaging when once the voice is heard,
For the river calls and the road calls, and oh! the call of a bird!

Yonder the long horizon lies, and there by night and day
The old ships draw to home again, the young ships sail away;
And come I may, but go I must, and, if men ask you why,
You may put the blame on the stars and the sun and the white road and the sky.

Gerald Gould

I WANT TO GO WANDERING

I want to go wandering. Who shall declare
I will regret if I dare?

To the rich days of age—
To some mid-afternoon—

A wide fenceless prairie,
A lonely old tune,
Ant-hills and sunflowers,
And sunset too soon.

Behind the brown mountain
The sun will go down;
I shall climb, I shall climb,
To the sumptuous crown;
To the rocks of the summit,
And find some strange things: —
Some echo of echoes
When the thunder-wind sings;
Old Spanish necklaces,
Indian rings,
Or a feeble old eagle
With great, dragging wings.
He may leave me and soar;
But if he shall die,
I shall bury him deep
While the thunder-winds cry.

And there, as the last of my earth-nights go:
What is the thing I shall know?

With a feather cast off from his wings
I shall write, be it revel or psalm,
Or whisper of redwood, or cypress, or palm, —
The treasure of dream that he brings.

The soul of the eagle will call,
Whether he lives or he dies: —
The cliff and the prairies call,
The sage-bush and starlight sing,
And the songs of my far-away Sangamon call

From the plume of the bird of the Rockies,
And midnight's omnipotent wing —
The last of my earth-nights will ring
With cries from a far haunted river,
And all of my wandering,
Wandering,
Wandering,
Wandering. . . .

Vachel Lindsay

DO YOU FEAR THE WIND?

Do you fear the force of the wind,
The slash of the rain?
Go face them and fight them,
Be savage again.
Go hungry and cold like the wolf,
Go wade like the crane:
The palms of your hands will thicken,
The skin of your cheeks will tan,
You'll grow ragged and weary and swarthy,
But you'll walk like a man!

Hamlin Garland

"OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY"

Where forlorn sunsets flare and fade
On desolate sea and lonely sand,
Out of the silence and the shade
What is the voice of strange command
Calling you still, as friend calls friend
With love that cannot brook delay,

To rise and follow the ways that wend
Over the hills and far away?

Hark in the city, street on street
A roaring reach of death and life,
Of vortices that clash and fleet
And ruin in appointed strife,
Hark to it calling, calling clear,
Calling until you cannot stay
From dearer things than your own most dear
Over the hills and far away.

Out of the sound of the ebb-and-flow,
Out of the sight of lamp and star,
It calls you where the good winds blow,
And the unchanging meadows are:
From faded hopes and hopes agleam,
It calls you, calls you night and day
Beyond the dark into the dream
Over the hills and far away.

W. E. Henley

"I HEAR THE WOODLANDS CALLING"

I hear the woodlands calling, and their red is like the blare
Of trumpets in the air,
Where rebel Autumn plants her tents and crowns her gypsy hair.

I hear her beauty calling glad, with crimson and with gold,
As oft it called of old;
And I must forth and greet her there and clasp her close and hold.

As yesterday, again to-day, my heart will run to her,
The gypsy wanderer,
Through scarlet of the berry-pod and purple of the burr.

The vines that vision forth her cheeks shall tell me where she lies,
Soft gazing at the skies;
And I will steal upon her dreams and look into her eyes.

The sumach that repeats her lips shall tell me where she smiles,
Who still my heart beguiles,
And I will speak her face to face and lounge with her for miles.

A riot and a tangle there, a blur of gold and gray;
She surely went this way —
Or, so it seems, the maples cry, the cloudy asters say.

Oh, I must up and strike the trail, that often I have gone,
At sunset and at dawn,
Where all the beauty of the world puts all her splendor on.

I hear her bugles on the hills; I see her banners blowing,
And all her campfires glowing, —
The campfires of her dreams, — and I — I must be up and going.

Madison Cawein.

AFTERNOON ON A HILL

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

Edna St. Vincent Millay

THE ROAD TO ANYWHERE

Across the places deep and dim,
And places brown and bare,
It reaches to the planet's rim —
The Road to Anywhere.

Now east is east, and west is west,
But north lies in between,
And he is blest whose feet have prest
The road that's cool and green.

The road of roads for them that dare
The lightest whim obey,
To follow where the moose or bear
Has brushed his headlong way.

The secrets that these tangles house
Are step by step revealed,
While, to the sun, the grass and boughs
A store of odors yield.

More sweet these odors in the sun
Than swim in chemists' jars;

And when the fragrant day is done,
Night — and a shoal of stars.

Oh, east is east, and west is west,
But north lies full and fair;
And blest is he who follows free
The Road to Anywhere.

Bert Leston Taylor

THE ROAD

As one who walks in sleep, up a familiar lane
I went, my road to discover:
In my head was dark bewilderment and in my heart a pain;
The branches hung straight over.

At the summit the sky blazed with endless stars, refired
By the ebbing of the day;
The earth was darkly beautiful and I was very tired.
There was my road, and nothing more to say.

John Gould Fletcher

COMMON THINGS

COMMON THINGS

THE PASTURE

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I sha'n't be gone long. — You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long. — *You come too.*

Robert Frost

SIMPLICITY [1]

How happy is the little stone
That rambles in the road alone,
And doesn't care about careers,
And exigencies never fears;
Whose coat of elemental brown
A passing universe put on;
And independent as the sun,
Associates or glows alone,
Fulfilling absolute decree
In casual simplicity.

Emily Dickinson

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.

PEDIGREE [1]

The pedigree of honey
Does not concern the bee;
A clover, any time, to him
Is aristocracy.

Emily Dickinson

LOVELIEST OF TREES

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride [2]
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

A. E. Housman

THE FIRST DANDELION

Simple and fresh and fair from winter's close emerging,
As if no artifice of fashion, business, politics, had ever been,

[1] Copyright, Little, Brown and Company, 1890.
[2] Woodland ride: a road cut through a forest or in a wood.

Forth from its sunny nook of sheltered grass — innocent,
golden, calm as the dawn,
The spring's first dandelion shows its trustful face.

Walt Whitman

DANDELION [1]

O Little Soldier with the golden helmet,
What are you guarding on my lawn?
You with your green gun
And your yellow beard,
Why do you stand so stiff?
There is only the grass to fight!

Hilda Conkling

(*Written at the age of eight*)

TULIP

Clean as a lady
cool as glass
fresh without fragrance
the tulip was.

The craftsman who carved her
of metal prayed
"Live, oh thou lovely":
Half-metal she stayed.

Humbert Wolfe

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Poems by A Little Girl* by Hilda Conkling. Copyright, 1920, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

DAISIES

At evening when I go to bed
I see the stars shine overhead;
They are the little daisies white
That dot the meadow of the night.

And often while I'm dreaming so,
Across the sky the moon will go;
It is a lady, sweet and fair,
Who comes to gather daisies there.

For, when at morning I arise,
There's not a star left in the skies;
She's picked them all and dropped them down
Into the meadows of the town.

Frank Dempster Sherman

DAISIES

Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea,
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolinks rallied them up from the dell,
The orioles whistled them out of the wood;
And all of their singing was, "Earth, it is well!"
And all of their dancing was, "Life, thou art good!"

Bliss Carman

THE HUNGRY HEART

My heart, being hungry, feeds on food
  The fat of heart despise.
Beauty where beauty never stood,
  And sweet where no sweet lies
I gather to my querulous need,
Having a growing heart to feed.

It may be, when my heart is dull,
  Having attained its girth,
I shall not find so beautiful
  The meagre shapes of earth,
Nor linger in the rain to mark
The smell of tansy through the dark.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

TO A SNOWFLAKE

What heart could have thought you? —
Past our devisal
(O filigree petal!)
Fashioned so purely,
Fragilely, surely,
From what Paradisal
Imagineless metal,
Too costly for cost?
Who hammered you, wrought you,
From argentine vapor? —

"God was my shaper.
Passing surmisal,

He hammered, He wrought me,
From curled silver vapor,
To lust of his mind: —
Thou couldst not have thought me!
So purely, so palely,
Tinily, surely,
Mightily, frailly,
Insculped and embossed,
With His hammer of wind,
And His graver of frost."

Francis Thompson

SONG FOR A LITTLE HOUSE[1]

I'm glad our house is a little house,
Not too tall nor too wide:
I'm glad the hovering butterflies
Feel free to come inside.

Our little house is a friendly house,
It is not shy or vain;
It gossips with the talking trees,
And makes friends with the rain.

And quick leaves cast a shimmer of green
Against our whited walls,
And in the phlox, the courteous bees
Are paying duty calls.

Christopher Morley

[1] From *Chimney Smoke* by Christopher Morley. Copyright 1917, 1920, 1921, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

PRAYER FOR THIS HOUSE

May nothing evil cross this door,
And may ill-fortune never pry
About these windows; may the roar
And rains go by.

Strengthened by faith, the rafters will
Withstand the battering of the storm.
This hearth, though all the world grow chill
Will keep you warm.

Peace shall walk softly through these rooms,
Touching your lips with holy wine,
Till every casual corner blooms
Into a shrine.

Laughter shall drown the raucous shout
And, though the sheltering walls are thin,
May they be strong to keep hate out
And hold love in.

Louis Untermeyer

BELLS IN THE COUNTRY

Bells in the country,
They sing the heart to rest
When night is on the high road
And day is in the west.

And once they came to my house
As soft as beggars shod,
And brought it nearer heaven,
And maybe nearer God.

Robert Nathan

ESCAPE AT BEDTIME

The lights from the parlor and kitchen shone out
  Through the blinds and the windows and bars;
And high overhead and all moving about,
  There were thousands of millions of stars.
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
  Nor of people in church or the Park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,
  And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,
  And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall
  Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,
  And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
  And the stars going round in my head.

Robert Louis Stevenson

THE UNREALIZED IDEAL

My only Love is always near, —
  In country or in town
I see her twinkling feet, I hear
  The whisper of her gown.

She foots it ever fair and young,
  Her locks are tied in haste,
And one is o'er her shoulder flung,
  And hangs below her waist.

She ran before me in the meads;
  And down this world-worn track
She leads me on; but while she leads
  She never gazes back.

And yet her voice is in my dreams,
  To witch me more and more;
That wooing voice! Ah me, it seems
  Less near me than of yore.

Lightly I sped when hope was high,
  And youth beguiled the chase;
I follow — follow still; but I
  Shall never see her Face.

Frederick Locker Lampson

MOON SONG

The moonlight breaks upon the city's towers,
  And falls amid cemented steel and stone,
Shedding its lustrous light like white-lipped flowers
  Across the ruins of a storm wind-blown.

Upon the clothes behind the tenement
  That hang like ghosts suspended from thin lines,
To lovely, living things indifferent,
  Incongruous and strange the moonlight shines.

There is no magic from your presence here;
  O moon, mad moon, tuck up your trailing robe,
Its silver seems so ancient and severe
  Against the glow of one electric globe.

Go, spill your beauty on the laughing faces
Of happy flowers of a thousand hues,
That wait on tiptoe in the wilding spaces
To drink your wine with heavy draughts of dews.

Claude McKay

THE STREET-MUSICIAN

He plays for all the little side-streets, while
A worn, half-wistful smile
Kindles his face when people passing here
Stop and draw near.

So slight a note . . . and yet the thundering town
Has failed to roar it down;
Under the huge despairs, the shattering blows,
It lifts and grows.

Incongruous, unbidden and absurd;
And yet the street is stirred.
As men behold, for all its dark disguise,
The Dream arise!

Anonymous

A WASTED DAY

I spoiled the day;
Hotly, in haste.
All the calm hours
I gashed and defaced.

Let me forget,
Let me embark
—Sleep for my boat—
And sail through the dark.

Till a new day
  Heaven shall send,
Whole as an apple,
  Kind as a friend.

Frances Cornford

SATURDAY NIGHT

The lights of Saturday night beat golden, golden over the pillared street —
The long plate-glass of a Dream-World olden is as the footlights shining sweet —
Street-lamp — flambeau — glamour of trolley — comet-trail of the trains above
Splash where the jostling crowds are jolly with echoing laughter and human love.

This is the City of the Enchanted: and these are her Enchanted People:
Far and far is Daylight, haunted with whistle of mill and bell of steeple.
The Eastern tenements loose the women, the Western flats release the wives
To touch, where all the ways are common, a glory to their sweated lives.

The leather of shoes in the brilliant casement sheds a lustre over the heart,
The high-heaped fruit in the flaring basement glows with the tints of Turner's art.
Darwin's dream and the eye of Spencer saw not such a gloried race
As here, in copper light intenser than desert sun, glides face by face.

This drab washwoman, dazed and breathless, ray-chiselled
in the golden stream,
Is a magic statue standing deathless— her tub and soap-
suds touched with Dream.
Yea, in this people, glamour-sunnied, democracy wins
heaven again;
Here the unlearned and the unmoneyed laugh in the lights
of Lover's Land.

O Dream-World lights that lift through the ether millions
of miles to the Milky Way.
To-night Earth rolls through a golden weather that lights
the Pleiades where they play!
Yet . . . God? Does He lead these sons and daughters?
Yea, do they feel, with a passion that stills,
God on the face of the moving waters, God in the quiet
of the hills?

Yet . . . what if the million-mantled mountains, and what
if the million-moving sea
Are here alone in façades and fountains — our deep stone-
world of humanity —
We builders of cities and civilizations walled away from
the sea and the sod
Must reach, dream-led, for our revelations through one
another — as far as God.

Through one another — through one another — no more
the gleam on sea or land —
But so close that we see the Brother — and understand —
and understand!
Till, drawn in, swept still closer, closer, we see the gleam
in the human clod,
And clerk and foreman, peddler and grocer are in our
Family of God! *James Oppenheim*

SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look — on the topmost branches of the world
  The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick;
  Over the huddled rows of stone and brick,
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
  Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
  Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
  There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
  Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
  When this same moment made all mysteries clear;
  — The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
  So tawdry and so dear!

John Hall Wheelock

THE COMMONPLACE

The commonplace I sing;
How cheap is health! how cheap nobility!
Abstinence, no falsehood, no gluttony.
The open air I sing, freedom, toleration,
(Take here the mainest lesson — less from books — less
  from the schools,)
The common day and night — the common earth and
  waters,
Your farm — your work, trade, occupation,
The democratic wisdom underneath, like solid ground
  for all.

Walt Whitman

PLACES

PLACES

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

William Butler Yeats

THE WAVES OF BREFFNY

The grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic on it and many a horse and cart,
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it; and terror on the wind:
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal;
But the little waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the little waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

Eva Gore-Booth

TEWKESBURY ROAD

It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither nor why;
Through the grey light drift of the dust, in the keen cool rush of the air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue lift of the sky;

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the tall green fern at the brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse, and the foxgloves purple and white;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop down to the pools to drink,
When the stars are mellow and large at the coming on of the night.

O! to feel the warmth of the rain, and the homely smell of the earth,
Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy past power of words;

And the blessed green comely meadows seem all a-ripple with mirth
At the lilt of the shifting feet, and the dear wild cry of the birds.

John Masefield

A STREET SCENE

The east is a clear violet mass
Behind the houses high;
The laborers with their kettles pass;
The carts go creaking by.

Carved out against the tender sky,
The convent gables lift;
Half way below, the old boughs lie
Heaped in a great white drift.

They tremble in the passionate air;
They part, and clean and sweet
The cherry flakes fall here, fall there;
A handful stirs the street.

The workmen look up as they go;
And one, remembering plain
How white the Irish orchards blow,
Turns back, and looks again.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

They are all gone away,
The House is shut and still,
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray
  The winds blow bleak and shrill:
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one to-day
  To speak them good or ill:
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray
  Around that sunken sill?
They are all gone away.

And our poor fancy-play
  For them is wasted skill:
There is nothing more to say.

There is ruin and decay
  In the House on the Hill:
They are all gone away,
There is nothing more to say.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

INTERIOR

The little moths are creeping
  Across the cottage pane;
On the floor the chickens gather,
  And they make talk and complain.

And she sits by the fire
  Who has reared so many men;
Her voice is low like the chickens'
  With the things she says again.

"The sons that come back do be restless,
They search for the thing to say;
Then they take thought like the swallows,
And the morrow brings them away.

"In the old, old days, upon Innish,
The fields were lucky and bright,
And if you lay down you'd be covered
By the grass of one soft night."

She speaks and the chickens gather,
And they make talk and complain,
While the little moths are creeping
Across the cottage pane.

Padraic Colum

WHERE THE WOOD-THRUSH CALLS

Somewhere Jack-in-the-pulpit stands,
Master of all he sees,
Where the checkering shadows wander down,
Under the forest trees,
And marshalled ferns in their brave array
Are guarding patiently
The cool green moss that has ne'er been trod
In the place that waits for me.

The roar of the city grows faint and low
As I list to the silence deep,
To the call of the wood-thrush fairy clear
Where the trees their shadows keep.
The heat and the struggle are far away,
And I stand for a moment free,
As I breathe the breath of the chiming brook
In the place that waits for me.

Perhaps when the labor all is done
I may come to my kingdom fair;
Perhaps through the years of shade and sun
It will always wait me there;
But I know the violets still will bloom
With never an eye to see,
And the wood-thrush call with none to hear
In the place that waits for me.

Here in the strife my comrades toil
Where the prisoning walls are high,
Where the noonday glares on the burning street,
And the people surging by.
I would they could hear the chiming brook,
I would that their eyes could see
The shadows dance on the woodland moss
In the place that waits for me.

Jessie Wallace Hughan

THE HAYLOFT

Through all the pleasant meadow-side
The grass grew shoulder-high,
Till the shining scythes went far and wide
And cut it down to dry.

Those green and sweetly smelling crops
They led in waggons home;
And they piled them here in mountain tops
For mountaineers to roam.

Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-Nail,
Mount Eagle and Mount High; —
The mice that in these mountains dwell,
No happier are than I!

Oh, what a joy to clamber there,
Oh, what a place to play,
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,
The happy hills of hay!

Robert Louis Stevenson

KEEPSAKE MILL

Over the borders, a sin without pardon,
Breaking the branches and crawling below,
Out through the breach in the wall of the garden,
Down by the banks of the river, we go.

Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,
Here is the sluice with the race running under —
Marvellous places, though handy to home!

Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,
Deaf are his ears with the moil[1] of the mill.

Years may go by, and the wheel in the river
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever
Long after all of the boys are away.

Home from the Indies and home from the ocean,
Heroes and soldiers we all shall come home;
Still we shall find the old mill wheel in motion,
Turning and churning that river to foam.

[1] *Moil:* noisy labor, drudgery.

You with the bean that I gave when we quarrelled,
I with your marble of Saturday last,
Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

Robert Louis Stevenson

FULL MOON

(*Santa Barbara*)

I listened, there was not a sound to hear
In the great rain of moonlight pouring down,
The eucalyptus trees were carved in silver,
And a light mist of silver lulled the town.

I saw far off the gray Pacific bearing
A broad white disk of flame,
And on the garden-walk a snail beside me
Tracing in crystal the slow way he came.

Sara Teasdale

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

The little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost

A BROOK IN THE CITY

The farm house lingers, though averse to square
With the new city street it has to wear
A number in. But what about the brook
That held the house as in an elbow-crook?
I ask as one who knew the brook, its strength
And impulse, having dipped a finger length
And made it leap my knuckle, having tossed
A flower to try its currents where they crossed.
The meadow grass could be cemented down
From growing under pavements of a town;
The apple trees be sent to hearth-stone flame.
Is water wood to serve a brook the same?
How else dispose of an immortal force
No longer needed? Staunch it at its source
With cinder loads dumped down? The brook was thrown
Deep in a sewer dungeon under stone
In fetid darkness still to live and run —
And all for nothing it had ever done
Except forget to go in fear perhaps.
No one would know except for ancient maps
That such a brook ran water. But I wonder
If from its being kept forever under,
These thoughts may not have risen that so keep
This new-built city from both work and sleep.

Robert Frost

CHILDREN

CHILDREN

A BABY'S FEET

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,
  Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
  A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
  They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
  Gleam half so heavenly sweet,
As shine on life's untrodden brink
  A baby's feet.

A. C. Swinburne

A BABY'S EYES

A baby's eyes, ere speech begin,
  Ere lips learn words or sighs,
Bless all things bright enough to win
  A baby's eyes.

Love, while the sweet thing laughs and lies
  And sleep flows out and in,
Sees perfect in them Paradise!

Their glance might cast out pain and sin,
  Their speech make dumb the wise,
By mute glad godhead felt within
  A baby's eyes.

A. C. Swinburne

"ONE, TWO, THREE!"

It was an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy that was half-past three;
And the way that they played together
Was beautiful to see.

She couldn't go romping and jumping,
And the boy no more could he;
For he was a thin little fellow,
With a thin little twisted knee.

They sat in the yellow sunlight,
Out under the maple tree;
And the game they played I'll tell you,
Just as it was told to me.

It was Hide-and-Go-Seek they were playing,
Though you'd never have known it to be —
With an old, old, old, old lady,
And a boy with a twisted knee.

The boy would bend his face down
On his little sound right knee,
And he guessed where she was hiding
In guesses One, Two, Three.

"You are in the china closet!"
He would laugh and cry with glee —
It wasn't the china closet,
But he still had Two and Three.

"You are up in papa's big bedroom,
In the chest with the queer old key!"
And she said: "You are *warm* and *warmer;*
But you are not quite right," said she.

"It can't be the little cupboard
Where mamma's things used to be —
So it must be in the little clothes-press, gran'ma,"
And he found her with his Three.

Then she covered her face with her fingers,
That were wrinkled and white and wee,
And she guessed where the boy was hiding,
With a One and a Two and a Three.

And they never had stirred from their places
Right under the maple tree —
This old, old, old, old lady
And the boy with the lame little knee —
This dear, dear, dear, dear old lady,
And the boy who was half-past three.

Henry Cuyler Bunner

THE DESIRE

Give me no mansions ivory white
Nor palaces of pearl and gold;
Give me a child for all delight,
Just four years old.

Give me no wings of rosy shine
Nor snowy raiment, fold on fold,
Give me a little boy all mine,
Just four years old.

Give me no gold and starry crown
Nor harps, nor palm branches unrolled;
Give me a nestling head of brown,
Just four years old.

Give me a cheek that's like the peach,
Two arms to clasp me from the cold;
And all my heaven's within my reach,
Just four years old.

Dear God, You give me from Your skies
A little paradise to hold,
As Mary once her Paradise,
Just four years old.

Katherine Tynan

BIBLE STORIES

The room was low and small and kind;
And in its cupboard old,
The shells were set out to my mind;
The cups I loved with rims of gold.

Then, with that good gift which she had,
My mother showed at will,
David, the ruddy Syrian lad,
With his few sheep upon a hill;

A shop down a rude country street,
The chips strewn on the floor,
And faintly keen across the heat;
The simple kinsfolk at the door;

Mary amid the homely din,
As slim as violet;
The little Jesus just within,
About His father's business set.

My mother rose, and then I knew
As she stood smiling there,
Her gown was of that gentle blue
Which she had made the Virgin wear.

How fair the very chairs were grown!
The gilt rose on each back
Into a Syrian rose was blown,
And not our humble gold and black.

That week long, in our acres old,
Lad David did I see;
From out our cups with rims of gold,
The little Jesus supped with me.

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall-stair,
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:
Yet I know by their very eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall!
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair;
If I try to escape, they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old mustache as I am
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down in the dungeon
In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A CHILD'S PRAYER

(*Ex Ore Infantium*)

Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?
Didst Thou sometimes think of *there,*

And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 'twould distress me —
Not an angel there to dress me!

Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels, that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?
And did they tire, sometimes, being young?
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost Thou like it best, that we,
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
(I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.)
And did Thy Mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way —
When Thou wast so little, say
Could'st Thou talk Thy Father's way? —
So, a little Child, come down

And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair),
And say: "O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And He will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou wast young!

Francis Thompson

A CHILD UPON THE STAIR

Now when I stand upon the stair alone
  And listen, I can hear a quiet stir
Like even breathing, or a whispered drone,
  A sound that any little noise would blur.
I know that there is something in this hall,
  That climbs the waiting stairs and then goes down
On silent feet, or clings hard to the wall,
  As though it loved the old and faded brown.
Sometimes I feel that I, myself, can fly
  If I stand very still upon the stair,
Believing that there is no reason why
  I cannot trust my body to the air. . . .
Do other children find their stairs so near
  To things that grown-ups say cannot be here?

Carolyn Hall

MOON-CHILDREN

When with fingers all uncertain, tiny stars have torn the curtain
And are peering down the avenue of dreams;
When the night is soft and tender, then the moon is in his splendor
And his silver brothers swim in all the streams.

And he looks into the valleys, into city-streets and alleys,
But no beauty matches his in any place;
Till into the small rooms creeping, he beholds the babies sleeping —
And for shame he draws a cloud before his face!

Michael Lewis

THE DAUGHTER AT EVENING

Before her supper where she sits
With every favored toe she plays,
Singing whatever ballad fits
The past romances of her days.

The dusk comes softly to her room,
The night winds in the branches stir;
That nations battle to their doom
Across the seas, is naught to her.

For what she does not know, she eats,
A worm, a twig, a block, a fly,
And every novel thing she meets
Is bitten into bye and bye.

She, from the blankets of her bed,
  Holds no opinion on the war,
But munches on her thumb instead,
  This being what a thumb is for.

The troubles that invade the day,
  On some remote tomorrow creep;
Comes Bertha with the supper tray,
  And — now I laymen down ee beep.

Robert Nathan

THE YOUNG MYSTIC

We sat together close and warm,
  My little tired boy and I —
  Watching across the evening sky
The coming of the storm.

No rumblings rose, no thunders crashed,
  The west-wind scarcely sang aloud;
  But from a huge and solid cloud
The summer lightnings flashed.

And then he whispered "Father, watch;
  I think God's going to light His moon —"
  "And when, my boy" . . . "Oh, very soon.
I saw Him strike a match!"

Louis Untermeyer

THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of story-books.

Robert Louis Stevenson

MUMPS

I had a feeling in my neck,
And on the sides were two big bumps;
I couldn't swallow anything
At all because I had the mumps.

And Mother tied it with a piece,
And then she tied up Will and John,
And no one else but Dick was left
That didn't have a mump rag on.

He teased at us and laughed at us,
And said, whenever he went by,
"It's vinegar and lemon-drops
And pickles!" just to make us cry.

But Tuesday Dick was very sad
And cried because his neck was sore,
And not a one said sour things
To anybody any more.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

A RECOLLECTION

My father's friend came once to tea.
He laughed and talked. He spoke to me.
But in another week they said
That friendly pink-faced man was dead.

"How sad . . ." they said, "the best of men."
So said I too, "How sad"; but then
Deep in my heart I thought with pride,
"I know a person who has died!"

Frances Cornford

WHAT IS THE GRASS?

A child said What is the grass? fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark and say *Whose?*

Walt Whitman

BABY TOES

There is a blue star, Janet,
Fifteen years' ride from us,
If we ride a hundred miles an hour.

There is a white star, Janet,
Forty years' ride from us,
If we ride a hundred miles an hour.

Shall we ride
To the blue star
Or the white star?

Carl Sandburg

HELGA

The wishes on this child's mouth
Came like snow on marsh cranberries;
The tamarack kept something for her;
The wind is ready to help her shoes.
The north has loved her; she will be
A grandmother feeding geese on frosty
Mornings; she will understand
Early snow on the cranberries
Better and better then.

Carl Sanburg

FOR ARVIA

(On Her Fifth Birthday)

You Eyes, you large and all-inquiring Eyes,
That look so dubiously into me,
And are not satisfied with what you see,
Tell me the worst and let us have no lies;
Tell me the secret of your scrutinies,
And of myself. Am I a Mystery?
Am I a Boojum — or just Company?
What do you say? What do you think, You Eyes?
You say not; but you think, beyond a doubt;
And you have the whole world to think about,
With very little time for little things.
So let it be; and let it all be fair —
For you, and for the rest who cannot share
Your gold of unrevealed awakenings.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

TIRED TIM

Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.
He lags the long bright morning through,
Ever so tired of nothing to do;
He moons and mopes the livelong day,
Nothing to think about, nothing to say;
Up to bed with his candle to creep,
Too tired to yawn, too tired to sleep:
Poor tired Tim! It's sad for him.

Walter De la Mare

GODFREY GORDON GUSTAVUS GORE

Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore —
No doubt you have heard the name before —
Was a boy who never would shut a door!

The wind might whistle, the wind might roar,
And teeth be aching and throats be sore,
But still he never would shut the door.

His father would beg, his mother implore,
"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
We really *do* wish you would shut the door!"

Their hands they wrung, their hair they tore;
But Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore
Was deaf as the buoy out at the Nore.

When he walked forth the folks would roar,
"Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore,
Why don't you think to shut the door?"

They rigged out a Shutter with sail and oar,
And threatened to pack off Gustavus Gore
On a voyage of penance to Singapore.

But he begged for mercy, and said, "No more!
Pray do not send me to Singapore
On a Shutter, and then I will shut the door!"

"You will?" said his parents; "then keep on shore!
But mind you do! For the plague is sore
Of a fellow that never will shut the door,
Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore!"

William Brighty Rands

MINNIE, MATTIE AND MAY

Minnie and Mattie
And fat little May,
Out in the country,
Spending a day.

Such a bright day,
With the sun glowing,
And the trees half in leaf,
And the grass growing.

Pinky white pigling
Squeals through his snout,
Woolly white lambkin
Frisks all about.

Cluck! cluck! the nursing-hen
Summons her flock, —
Ducklings all downy soft,
Yellow as yolk.

Cluck! cluck! the nursing-hen
Summons her chickens
To peck the dainty bits
Found in her pickings.

Minnie and Mattie
And May carry posies,
Half of sweet violets,
Half of primroses.

Give the sun time enough,
Glowing and glowing,
He'll rouse the roses
And bring them blowing.

Don't wait for roses,
  Losing to-day,
O Minnie, Mattie,
  And wise little May.

Violets and primroses
  Blossom to-day
For Minnie and Mattie
  And fat little May.

Christina Georgiana Rossetti

LEETLA GIUSEPPINA

Joe Baratta's Giuseppina
  She's so cute as she can be;
Justa com' here from Messina,
  Weeth da resta family.
Joe had money in da banka —
  He been savin' for a year —
An' he breeng hees wife, Bianca,
  An' da three small chidren here.
First ees baby, Catarina,
    Nexta Paolo (w'at you call
    Een da Inglaice langwadge "Paul"),
    An' da smartest wan of all —
      Giuseppina!

Giuseppina justa seven,
  But so smart as she can be;
Wida-wake at night-time even,
  Dere's so mooch dat's strange to see.
W'at you theenk ees mos' surprise her?
  No; ees not da buildin's tall;

Eef, my frand, you would be wisa
You mus' theenk of som'theeng small.
Eet's an ant! W'en first she seena
Wan o' dem upon da ground,
How she laughed an' danced around:
"O! 'Formica,' he has found
Giuseppina!"

"O!" she cried to heem, "Formica"
(Dat's Italian name for heem),
"How you getta here so queecka?
For I know you no can sweem;
An' you was not on da sheepa,
For I deed not see you dere.
How you evva mak' da treepa?
Only birds can fly een air.
How you gat here from Messina?
O! at las' I ondrastand!
You have dugga through da land
Jus' to find your leetla frand,
Giuseppina!"

T. A. Daly

TO DICK, ON HIS SIXTH BIRTHDAY[1]

Tho' I am very old and wise,
And you are neither wise nor old,
When I look far into your eyes,
I know things I was never told:

[1] From *Rivers to the Sea* by Sara Teasdale. Copyright, 1915, by the Macmillan Company.

I know how flame must strain and fret
Prisoned in a mortal net;
How joy with over-eager wings,
Bruises the small heart where he sings;
How too much life, like too much gold,
Is sometimes very hard to hold. . . .
All that is talking — but I know
This much is true, six years ago
An angel living near the moon
Walked thru the sky and sang a tune
Plucking stars to make his crown —
And suddenly two stars fell down,
Two falling arrows made of light.
Six years ago this very night
I saw them fall and wondered why
The angel dropped them from the sky —
But when I saw your eyes I knew
The angel sent the stars to you.

Sara Teasdale

TEN YEARS OLD

A city child, rooms are to him no mere
Places to live in. Each one has a clear
Color and character of its own. His toys
And tumbled books made the small bed-room seem
The place to build a practicable dream.
He likes the brilliant parlor and enjoys
Nothing so much as bringing other boys
To romp among the delicate furniture,
And brush within an inch of ivories, lamps,
And other things not held by iron clamps,

Like chinese vases, neatly insecure.
His father's library with its heavy tone
Seldom detains him, for he has his own.
He views the kitchen with a hungry eye
And loafs about it, nibbling on the stray
Dry crumbs of gossip that may drop his way,
Standing so innocently inattentive. Sly
And with a squirrel's curiosity,
Careless of barred or sacred corners, he
Hunts back of shelves until he finds the key
With which to open bureau-drawers and pry
Into forbidden desks and cupboards — there
Are scores of mysteries forbidden, new,
And so well hidden, they need looking through.
But most of all he likes the bath-room where
The panel mirror shows his four feet two,
Where, with a towel or bath-robe, he can strike
A hundred attitudes not only like
His printed heroes but the gods themselves.
Stripping himself he dreams and dances there,
The pink embodiment of Peter Pan.
Or changing to an older superman
He turns to Siegfried brandishing his sword
And Jason snatching at the Golden Fleece.
The figures crowd around him and increase:
Now he is David battling for the Lord,
Mixing his battle-cries with psalms of peace.
Now he is Mowgli, at the cobra's hoard
With black Bagheera. Swiftly he has drawn
Excalibur from its invisible sheath.
He is Ulysses on his native heath,
Tristram, Tom Sawyer and Bellerophon;
Cadmus about to sow the dragon's teeth;

The shining Parsifal who knew no sin;
Sir Launcelot and Huckleberry Finn;
George Washington and Captain Hook and Thor;
Hansel awaking in the magic wood;
Frank Merriwell, John Silver, Robin Hood —
He is all these and half a hundred more.
He scowls and strides, he utters harsh commands;
Great armies follow him to new-born lands,
Battling for treasures lost or glories gone.
None can withstand the thunder of his frown;
His eye is terrible; the walls go down.
Cries of the conquered mingle with the cheers.
While through the clash and battle-smoke he hears —
"Richard! Get through! And put your stockings on!"

Louis Untermeyer

OTHER PEOPLE

SEUMAS BEG

A man was sitting underneath a tree
Outside the village, and he asked me what
Name was upon this place, and said that he
Was never here before. He told a lot
Of stories to me too. His nose was flat.
I asked him how it happened, and he said
The first mate of the Mary Ann done that
With a marlin-spike one day, but he was dead,
And jolly good job too; and he'd have gone
A long way to have killed him, and he had
A gold ring in one ear; the other one
"Was bit off by a crocodile, bedad."
That's what he said. He taught me how to chew.
He was a real nice man. He liked me, too.

James Stephens

MISS T.

It's a very odd thing—
  As odd as can be—
That whatever Miss T. eats
  Turns into Miss T.;
Porridge and apples,
  Mince, muffins and mutton,
Jam, junket, jumbles—
  Not a rap, nor a button
It matters; the moment
  They're out of her plate,
Though shared by Miss Butcher
  And sour Mr. Bate;

Tiny and cheerful,
And neat as can be,
Whatever Miss T. eats
Turns into Miss T.

Walter De la Mare

MR. WELLS

On Sunday morning, then he comes
To church, and everybody smells
The blacking and the toilet soap
And camphor balls from Mr. Wells.

He wears his whiskers in a bunch,
And wears his glasses on his head
I mustn't call him Old Man Wells —
No matter — that's what Father said.

And when the little blacking smells
And camphor balls and soap begin,
I do not have to look to know
That Mr. Wells is coming in.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

BILL PETERS

Bill Peters was a hustler
From Independence town;
He warn't a college scholar
Nor man of great renown,
But Bill had a way o' doin' things
An' doin' 'em up brown.

Bill druv the stage from Independence
Up to the Smokey Hill;
An' everybody knowed him thar
As Independence Bill —
That warn't no feller on the route
That druv with half the skill.

Bill druv four pair of horses,
Same as you'd drive a team,
An' you'd think you was a-travelin'
On a railroad druv by steam;
An' he'd git thar on time, you bet,
Or Bill 'ud bust a seam.

He carried mail an' passengers,
An' he started on the dot,
An' them teams o' his'n, so they say,
Was never known to trot;
But they went it in a gallop
An' kept their axles hot.

When Bill's stage 'ud bust a tire,
Or something 'ud break down,
He'd hustle round an' patch her up
An' start off with a bound;
An' the wheels o' that old shack o' his
Scarce ever touched the ground.

An' Bill didn't 'low no foolin',
An' when Injuns hove in sight,
An' bullets rattled at the stage,
He druv with all his might.
He'd holler, "Fellers give 'em hell!
I ain't got time to fight."

Then the way them wheels 'ud rattle,
  An' the way the dust 'ud fly,
You'd think a million cattle
  Had stampeded an' gone by.
But the mail 'ud get thar just the same,
  If the horses had to die!

He druv the stage for many a year
  Along the Smokey Hill,
An' a pile o' wild Comanches
  Did Bill Peters have to kill —
An' I reckon if he'd had got luck
  He'd be a drivin' still.

But he chanced one day to run agin
  A bullet made o' lead,
Which was harder than he bargained for
  An' now poor Bill is dead;
An' when they brung his body home
  A barrel o' tears was shed.

American Cowboy Ballad
(Collected by John A. Lomax)

FATHER WILLIAM

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
  "And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head —
  Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
  "I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
  Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown most uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door —
Pray, what is the reason for that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment — one shilling the box —
Allow me to sell you a couple."

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak;
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw,
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose —
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is enough,"
Said his father; "don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!"

Lewis Carroll

MOTHER

I have praised many loved ones in my song,
And yet I stand
Before her shrine, to whom all things belong,
With empty hand.

Perhaps the ripening future holds a time
For things unsaid;
Not now; men do not celebrate in rhyme
Their daily bread.

Theresa Helburn

THE WATCHER

She always leaned to watch for us,
Anxious if we were late,
In winter by the window,
In summer by the gate;

And though we mocked her tenderly,
Who had such foolish care,
The long way home would seem more safe
Because she waited there.

Her thoughts were all so full of us,
She never could forget!
And so I think that where she is
She must be watching yet,

Waiting till we come home to her,
Anxious if we are late —
Watching from Heaven's window,
Leaning from Heaven's gate.

Margaret Widdemer

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

Alice Meynell

THE OLD LADY

The old, old lady
that nobody knows
sits in the garden
shelter and sews.

Save for her restless
fingers she
is cold and still
as ivory.

The chestnut-blossom
blown on her dress
seems only a sculptor's
cleverness.

Humbert Wolfe

THE LAST LEAF

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear

Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago —
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

THE RUNNER

On a flat road runs the well-train'd runner,
He is lean and sinewy with muscular legs,
He is thinly clothed, he leans forward as he runs,
With lightly closed fists and arms partially rais'd.

Walt Whitman

PORTRAIT BY A NEIGHBOR

Before she has her floor swept
  Or her dishes done,
Any day you'll find her
  A-sunning in the sun!

It's long after midnight
  Her key's in the lock,
And you never see her chimney smoke
  Till past ten o'clock.

She digs in her garden
  With a shovel and a spoon
She weeds her lazy lettuce
  By the light of the moon,

She walks up the walk
  Like a woman in a dream,
She forgets she borrowed butter
  And pays you back cream!

Her lawn looks like a meadow,
  And if she mows the place
She leaves the clover standing
  And the Queen Anne's lace!

Edna St. Vincent Millay

IN PRAISE OF JOHNNY APPLESEED

(Born 1775. Died 1847)

I. Over the Appalachian Barricade

* *

To be read like old leaves on the elm tree of Time.
Sifting soft winds with sentence and rhyme.

In the days of President Washington,
The glory of the nations,
Dust and ashes,
Snow and sleet,
And hay and oats and wheat,
Blew west,
Crossed the Appalachians,
Found the glades of rotting leaves, the soft deer-pastures,
The farms of the far-off future
In the forest.
Colts jumped the fence,
Snorting, ramping, snapping, sniffing,
With gastronomic calculations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
The east walls of our citadel,
And turned to gold-horned unicorns,
Feasting in the dim farms of the forest.
Stripedest, kickingest kittens escaped,
Caterwauling "Yankee Doodle Dandy,"
Renounced their poor relations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to tiny tigers
In the humorous forest.
Chickens escaped
From farmyard congregations
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to amber trumpets

On the ramparts of our Hoosiers' nest and citadel,
Millennial heralds
Of the foggy, mazy forest.
Pigs broke loose, scrambled west,
Scorned their loathsome stations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
Turned to roaming, foaming wild boars
Of the forest.
The smallest, blindest puppies toddled west
While their eyes were coming open,
And, with misty observations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
Barked, barked, barked
At the glow-worms and the marsh lights and the lightning-bugs,
And turned to ravening wolves
Of the forest.
Crazy parrots and canaries flew west,
Drunk on May-time revelations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to delirious, flower-dressed fairies
Of the lazy forest.
Haughtiest swans and peacocks swept west,
And, despite soft derivations,
Crossed the Appalachians,
And turned to blazing warrior souls
Of the forest,
Singing the ways
Of the Ancient of Days.
And the "Old Continentals
In their ragged regimentals,"
With bard's imaginations,
Crossed the Appalachians.

And
A boy
Blew west
And with prayers and incantations,
And with "Yankee Doodle Dandy,"
Crossed the Appalachians,
And was "young John Chapman,"
Then
"Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,"
Chief of the fastnesses, dappled and vast,
In a pack on his back,
In a deer-hide sack,
The beautiful orchards of the past,
The ghosts of all the forests and the groves—
In that pack on his back,
In that talisman sack,
To-morrow's peaches, pears and cherries,
To-morrow's grapes and red raspberries,
Seeds and tree souls, precious things,
Feathered with microscopic wings,
All the outdoors the child heart knows,
And the apple, green, red, and white,
Sun of his day and his night—
The apple allied to the thorn,
Child of the rose.
Porches untrod of forest houses
All before him, all day long,
"Yankee Doodle" his marching song;
And the evening breeze
Joined his psalms of praise
As he sang the ways
Of the Ancient of Days.

Leaving behind august Virginia,
Proud Massachusetts, and proud Maine,
Planting the trees that would march and train
On, in his name to the great Pacific,
Like Birnam wood to Dunsinane,
Johnny Appleseed swept on,
Every shackle gone,
Loving every sloshy brake,
Loving every skunk and snake,
Loving every leathery weed,
Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,
Master and ruler of the unicorn-ramping forest,
The tiger-mewing forest,
The rooster-trumpeting, boar-foaming, wolf-ravening forest,
The spirit-haunted, fairy-enchanted forest,
Stupendous and endless,
Searching its perilous ways
In the name of the Ancient of Days.

II. The Indians Worship Him, but He Hurries On

Painted kings in the midst of the clearing
Heard him asking his friends the eagles
To guard each planted seed and seedling.
Then he was a god, to the red man's dreaming;
Then the chiefs brought treasures grotesque and fair,—
Magical trinkets and pipes and guns,
Beads and furs from their medicine-lair,—
Stuck holy feathers in his hair,
Hailed him with austere delight,
The orchard god was their guest through the night.

While the late snow blew from bleak Lake Erie,
Scourging rock and river and reed,
All night long they made great medicine
For Jonathan Chapman,
Johnny Appleseed,
Johnny Appleseed;
And as though his heart were a wind-blown wheatsheaf,
As though his heart were a new-built nest,
As though their heaven house were his breast,
In swept the snow-birds singing glory.
And I hear his bird heart beat its story,
Hear yet how the ghost of the forest shivers,
Hear yet the cry of the gray, old orchards,
Dim and decaying by the rivers,
And the timid wings of the bird-ghosts beating,
And the ghosts of the tom-toms beating, beating.

But he left their wigwams and their love.
By the hour of dawn he was proud and stark,
Kissed the Indian babes with a sigh,
Went forth to live on roots and bark,
Sleep in the trees, while the years howled by —

While you read, hear the hoof-beats of deer in the snow. And see, by their track, bleeding foot-prints we know.

Calling the catamounts by name,
And buffalo bulls no hand could tame,
Slaying never a living creature,
Joining the birds in every game,
With the gorgeous turkey gobblers mocking,
With the lean-necked eagles boxing and shouting;
Sticking their feathers in his hair, —
Turkey feathers,
Eagle feathers, —

Trading hearts with all beasts and weathers
He swept on, winged and wonder-crested,
Bare-armed, barefooted, and bare-breasted.

The maples, shedding their spinning seeds,
Called to his appleseeds in the ground,
Vast chestnut-trees, with their butterfly nations,
Called to his seeds without a sound.
And the chipmunk turned a "summerset,"
And the foxes danced the Virginia reel;
Hawthorne and crab-thorn bent, rain-wet,
And dropped their flowers in his night-black hair;
And the soft fawns stopped for his perorations;
And his black eyes shone through the forest-gleam,
And he plunged young hands into new-turned earth,
And prayed dear orchard boughs into birth;
And he ran with the rabbit and slept with the stream.
And so for us he made great medicine,
And so for us he made great medicine,
In the days of President Washington.

While you read,
see conventions
of deer go by.
The bucks toss
their horns, the
fuzzy fawns fly.

III. Johnny Appleseed's Old Age

Long, long after,
When settlers put up beam and rafter,
They asked of the birds: "Who gave this fruit?
Who watched this fence till the seeds took root?
Who gave these boughs?" They asked the sky,
And there was no reply.

To be read like
faint hoof-beats
of fawns long
gone.
From respectable
pasture, and
park and lawn,
And heart-beats
of fawns that
are coming again
When the for-
est, once more,
is the master of
men.

But the robin might have said,
"To the farthest West he has followed the sun,
His life and his empire just begun."

Self-scourged, like a monk, with a throne for wages,
Stripped like the iron-souled Hindu sages,
Draped like a statue, in strings like a scarecrow,
His helmet-hat an old tin pan,
But worn in the love of the heart of man,
Hairy Ainu, wild man of Borneo, Robinson Crusoe—
Johnny Appleseed;
And the robin might have said,
"Sowing, he goes to the far, new West,
With the apple, the sun of his burning breast—
The apple allied to the thorn,
Child of the rose."

Washington buried in Virginia,
Jackson buried in Tennessee,
Young Lincoln, brooding in Illinois,
And Johnny Appleseed, priestly and free,
Knotted and gnarled, past seventy years,
Still planted on in the woods alone.
Ohio and young Indiana—
These were his wide altar-stone,
Where still he burnt out flesh and bone.

Twenty days ahead of the Indian, twenty years ahead of the white man,
At last the Indian overtook him, at last the Indian hurried past him;
At last the white man overtook him, at last the white man hurried past him;

At last his own trees overtook him, at last his own trees
hurried past him.
Many cats were tame again,
Many ponies tame again,
Many pigs were tame again,
Many canaries tame again;
And the real frontier was his sun-burnt breast.

From the fiery core of that apple, the earth,
Sprang apple-amaranths divine.
Love's orchards climbed to the heavens of the West,
And snowed the earthly sod with flowers.
Farm hands from the terraces of the blest
Danced on the mists with their ladies fine
And Johnny Appleseed laughed with his dreams,
And swam once more the ice-cold streams.
And the doves of the spirit swept through the hours,
With doom-calls, love-calls, death-calls, dream-calls;
And Johnny Appleseed, all that year,
Lifted his hands to the farm-filled sky,
To the apple-harvesters busy on high;
And so once more his youth began,
And so for us he made great medicine —
Johnny Appleseed, medicine-man.

Then
The sun was his turned-up broken barrel,
Out of which his juicy apples rolled,
Down the repeated terraces,
Thumping across the gold,
An angel in each apple that touched the forest mold,
A ballot-box in each apple,
A state capital in each apple,

Great high schools, great colleges,
All America in each apple,
Each red, rich, round, and bouncing moon
That touched the forest mold.
Like scrolls and rolled-up flags of silk,
He saw the fruits unfold,
And all our expectations in one wild-flower written dream,
Confusion and death-sweetness, and a thicket of crab-thorns,
Heart of a hundred midnights, heart of the merciful morns.
Heaven's boughs bent down with their alchemy,
Perfumed airs, and thoughts of wonder.
And the dew on the grass and his own cold tears
Were one in brooding mystery,
Though death's loud thunder came upon him,
Though death's loud thunder struck him down —
The boughs and the proud thoughts swept through the thunder,
Till he saw our wide nation, each State a flower,
Each petal a park for holy feet,
With wild fawns merry on every street,
With wild fawns merry on every street,
The vista of ten thousand years, flower-lighted and complete.

Hear the lazy weeds murmuring, bays and rivers whispering,
From Michigan to Texas, California to Maine;
Listen to the eagles, screaming, calling,
" Johnny Appleseed, Johnny Appleseed,"
There by the doors of old Fort Wayne.

In the four-poster bed Johnny Appleseed built,
Autumn rains were the curtains, autumn leaves were the quilt.
He laid him down sweetly, and slept through the night,
Like a bump on a log, like a stone washed white,
There by the doors of old Fort Wayne.

Vachel Lindsay

BIRDS AND BEASTS

THE RUNAWAY

Once, when the snow of the year was beginning to fall,
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say "Whose colt?"
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head
And snorted to us. And then he had to bolt.
We heard the miniature thunder where he fled
And we saw him or thought we saw him dim and gray,
Like a shadow against the curtain of falling flakes.
"I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.
He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play
With the little fellow at all. He's running away.
I doubt if even his mother could tell him, "Sakes,
It's only weather." He'd think she didn't know.
Where is his mother? He can't be out alone."
And now he comes again with a clatter of stone
And mounts the wall again with whited eyes
And all his tail that isn't hair up straight.
He shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.
"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

Robert Frost

THE RABBIT

When they said the time to hide was mine,
I hid back under a thick grape vine.

And while I was still for the time to pass,
A little gray thing came out of the grass.

He hopped his way through the melon bed
And sat down close by a cabbage head.

He sat down close where I could see,
And his big still eyes looked hard at me,

His big eyes bursting out of the rim,
And I looked back very hard at him.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

THE KERRY COW

It's in Connacht in Munster that yourself might travel wide,
And be asking all the herds you'd meet along the countryside,
But you'd never meet a one could show the likes of her till now,
Where she's grazing in a Leinster field — my little Kerry cow.

If herself went to the cattle fairs she'd put all cows to shame,
For the finest poets of the land would meet to sing her fame;
And the young girls would be asking leave to stroke her satin coat,
They'd be praising and caressing her, and calling her a dote.

If the King of Spain gets news of her he'll fill his purse with gold,
And set sail to ask the English King where she is to be sold.
But the King of Spain may come to me, a crown upon his brow.
It is he may keep his golden purse — and I my Kerry cow.

The priest maybe will tell her fame to the Holy Pope of Rome,
And the Cardinals' College send for her to leave her Irish home;
But it's heart-broke she would be itself to cross the Irish sea,
'Twould be best they'd send a blessing to my Kerry cow and me.

When the Ulster men hear tell of her, they'll come with swords an' pikes,
For it's civil war there'll be no less if they should see her likes,
And you'll read it on the paper of the bloody fight there's been,
An' the Orangemen they're burying in fields of Leinster green.

There are red cows that's contrary, and there's white cows quare and wild,
But my Kerry cow is biddable, an' gentle as a child.
You may rare up kings and heroes on the lovely milk she yields,
For she's fit to foster generals to fight our battlefields.

In the histories they'll be making they've a right to put her name
With the horse of Troy and Oisin's hounds and other beasts of fame.
And the painters will be painting her beneath the hawthorn bough
Where she's grazing on the good green grass — my little Kerry cow.

W. M. Letts

CUSHY COW

Cushy cow has curly horns,
  Delicate, tipped with brown.
Swifter her hoofs fly backward
  Than any bull's in town.

We milk her into great white pails
  And crocks of cottage blue,
And her leavings run all over the yard—
  Yet our milking is never through!

I found her at smoky twilight
  By the well of the pale primrose,
Where grey elves hung on her haunches
  And nuzzled her grazing nose.

Laura Benét

A COW AT SULLINGTON

She leaves the puddle where she drinks,
  And comes toward the roadway bar
And looks into our eyes, and thinks
  What curious animals we are!

Charles Dalmon

A CATERPILLAR'S APOLOGY FOR EATING A FAVORITE GLADIOLUS

Confuse me not with impious things;
But wait for the appointed hour
When you shall see your vanished flower
Reborn resplendent in my wings!

Charles Dalmon

THE CATERPILLAR

Under this loop of honeysuckle,
A creeping, coloured caterpillar,
I gnaw the fresh green hawthorn spray,
I nibble it leaf by leaf away.

Down beneath grow dandelions,
Daisies, old-man's-looking-glasses;
Rooks flap croaking across the lane.
I eat and swallow and eat again.

Here come raindrops helter-skelter;
I munch and nibble unregarding:
Hawthorn leaves are juicy and firm.
I'll mind my business: I'm a good worm.

When I'm old, tired, melancholy,
I'll build a leaf-green mausoleum
Close by, here on this lovely spray,
And die and dream the ages away.

Some say worms win resurrection,
With white wings beating flitter-flutter,
But wings or a sound sleep, why should I care?
Either way I'll miss my share.

Under this loop of honeysuckle,
A hungry, hairy caterpillar,
I crawl on my high and swinging seat,
And eat, eat, eat — as one ought to eat.

Robert Graves

THE MOCKING BIRD

Hear! hear! hear!
Listen! the word
Of the mocking-bird!
Hear! hear! hear!
I will make all clear;
I will let you know
Where the footfalls go
That through the thicket and over the hill
Allure, allure.
How the bird-voice cleaves
Through the weft of leaves
With a leap and a thrill
Like the flash of a weaver's shuttle, swift and sudden and sure!

And lo, he is gone — even while I turn
The wisdom of his runes to learn.
He knows the mystery of the wood,
The secret of the solitude;
But he will not tell, he will not tell,
For all he promises so well.

Richard Hovey

THE BLACKBIRD

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The lark's is a clarion call,
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
  And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
  Our hearts and lips together.

W. E. Henley

THE BLACKBIRD

In the far corner
close by the swings,
every morning
a blackbird sings.

His bill's so yellow,
his coat's so black,
that he makes a fellow
whistle back.

Ann, my daughter,
thinks that he
sings for us two
especially.

Humbert Wolfe

THE KINGFISHER

It was the Rainbow gave thee birth,
  And left thee all her lovely hues;
And, as her mother's name was Tears,
  So runs it in thy blood to choose
For haunts the lonely pools, and keep
In company with trees that weep.

Go you and, with such glorious hues,
  Live with proud Peacocks in green parks;
On lawns as smooth as shining glass,
  Let every feather show its mark;
Get thee on boughs and clap thy wings
Before the windows of proud kings.

Nay, lovely Bird, thou art not vain;
  Thou hast no proud ambitious mind;
I also love a quiet place
  That's green, away from all mankind;
A lonely pool, and let a tree
Sigh with her bosom over me.

W. H. Davies

CHICKADEE [1]

The chickadee in the appletree
Talks all the time very gently.
He makes me sleepy.
I rock away to the sea-lights.
Far off I hear him talking
The way smooth bright pebbles
Drop into water . . .
Chick-a-*dee-dee-dee*. . . .

Hilda Conkling

(*Written at the age of six*)

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TO A SPARROW

Because you have no fear to mingle
Wings with those of greater part
So like me, with song I single
Your sweet impudence of heart.

And, when prouder feathers go where
Summer holds her leafy show,
You still come to us from nowhere,
Like grey leaves across the snow.

In back ways where odd and end go
To your meals you drop down sure,
Knowing every broken window
Of the hospitable poor.

There is no bird half so harmless,
None so sweetly rude as you.
None so common and so charmless,
None of virtues nude as you.

But for all your faults I love you,
For you linger with us still,
Though the wintry winds reprove you,
And the snow is on the hill.

Francis Ledwidge

HOMING SWALLOWS

Swift swallows sailing from the Spanish main,
O rain-birds racing merrily away
From hill-tops parched with heat and sultry plain
Of wilting plants and fainting flowers, say —

When at the noon-hour from the chapel school
  The children dash and scamper down the dale,
Scornful of teacher's rod and binding rule
  Forever broken and without avail,

Do they still stop beneath the giant tree
  To gather locusts in their childish greed,
And chuckle when they break the pods to see
  The golden powder clustered round the seed?

Claude McKay

THE WASP

When the ripe pears droop heavily,
  The yellow wasp hums loud and long
  His hot and drowsy autumn song:
A yellow flame he seems to be,
  When darting suddenly from high
  He lights where fallen peaches lie.

Yellow and black — this tiny thing's
A tiger-soul on elfin wings.

William Sharp

FIREFLIES

Little lamps of the dusk.
  You fly low and gold
When the summer evening
  Starts to unfold,
So that all the insects,
  Now, before you pass,
Will have light to see by
  Undressing in the grass.

But when night has flowered
  Little lamps a-gleam,
You fly over tree-tops
  Following a dream.
Men wonder from their windows
  That a firefly goes so far —
They do not know your longing
  To be a shooting star.

Carolyn Hall

DOLPHINS IN BLUE WATER

Hey! Crackerjack — jump!
Blue water,
Pink water,
Swirl, flick, flitter;
Snout into a wave-trough,
Plunge, curl.
Bow over,
Under,
Razor-cut and tumble.
Roll, turn —
Straight — and shoot at the sky,
All rose-flame drippings.
Down ring,
Drop,
Nose under,
Hoop,
Tail,
Dive,
And gone;
With smooth over-swirlings of blue water,
Oil-smooth cobalt,

Slipping, liquid lapis lazuli,
Emerald shadings,
Tintings of pink and ochre.
Prismatic slidings
Underneath a windy sky.

Amy Lowell

CAT'S MEAT

Ho, all you cats in all the street;
Look out, it is the hour of meat:

The little barrow is crawling along,
And the meat-boy growling his fleshy song.

Hurry, Ginger! Hurry, White!
Don't delay to court or fight.

Wandering Tabby, vagrant Black,
Yamble from adventure back!

Slip across the shining street,
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Lift your tail and dip your feet;
Find your penny — Meat! Meat!

Where's your mistress; learn to purr:
Pennies emanate from her.

Be to her, for she is Fate,
Perfectly affectionate.

(You, domestic Pinkie-Nose,
Keep inside and warm your toes.)

Flurry, flurry in the street —
Meat! Meat! Meat! Meat!

Harold Monro

THE AMBITIOUS MOUSE

If all the world were candy
  And the sky were frosted cake,
Oh, it would be a splendid job
  For a mouse to undertake!

To eat a path of sweetmeats
  Through candy forest aisles —
Explore the land of Pepper-mint
  Stretched out for miles and miles.

To gobble up a cloudlet,
  A little cup-cake star,
To swim a lake of liquid sweet
  With shores of chocolate bar.

But best of all the eating,
  Would be the toothsome fat,
Triumphant hour of mouse-desire,
  To eat a candy cat!

John Farrar

AT NIGHT

On moony nights the dogs bark shrill
Down the valley and up the hill.

There's one is angry to behold
The moon so unafraid and cold,
Who makes the earth as bright as day,
But yet unhappy, dead, and gray.

Another in his strawy lair
Says: "Who's a-howling over there?
By heavens I will stop him soon
From interfering with the moon!"

So back he barks, with throat upthrown:
"You leave our moon, our moon alone!"
And other distant dogs respond
Beyond the fields, beyond, beyond. . . .

Frances Cornford

DA PUP EEN DA SNOW

Deed you evra see Joy
  Gona wild weeth delight,
Jus' so lika small boy
W'en som' brighta new toy
  Mak's heem crazy excite',
You would know w'at I mean
Eef you jus' coulda seen —
  Not so long time ago —
How my leetla fat pup
  Ees first play een da snow.

O! I scream an' I roar
  An' so shaka weeth laughtra,
Dat my sides dey are sore
  For mos' three-four days aftra.
An' how mooch I would try,
  I no speak weeth sooch skeell
I could put een your eye
  W'at ees fresh een mine steell:
How dat leetla pup romp
  All aroun' da whole place,

How he bark, how he jomp
An' fall down on hees face;
How he fight, how he bite
An' ees tumble aroun',
Teel hees cover' weeth white
Lik a leetla fat clown;
W'at su'prise fill hees eyes
W'en he see da flakes sail,
How he bark at da skies,
How he chasa hees tail.

O! I weesh I could show
How ees looka, dat pup,
How he puff an' he blow
W'en hees leecked by da snow
An' ees gotta geeve up.
An' I sposa, no doubt,
You would say I am fibbin'
W'en I say hees tongue's out
Lika yarda peenk ribbon —
O! how mooch I would try,
I no speak weeth sooch skeell
I could put een your eye
W'at's so fresh een mine steell.
But I weesh you had been
Where you, too, coulda seen
W'at delighta me so —
How my leetla fat pup
Ees first play een da snow!

T. A. Daly

THE GRASSHOPPER[1]

The Grasshopper, the Grasshopper,
I will explain to you: —
He is the Brownies' racehorse,
The fairies' Kangaroo.

Vachel Lindsay

CHANTICLEER

Of all the birds from East to West
That tuneful are and dear,
I love that farmyard bird the best,
They call him Chanticleer.

Gold plume and copper plume,
Comb of scarlet gay;
'Tis he that scatters night and gloom,
And whistles back the day!

He is the sun's brave herald
That, ringing his blithe horn,
Calls round a world dew-pearled
The heavenly airs of morn.

O clear gold, shrill and bold!
He calls through creeping mist
The mountains from the night and cold
To rose and amethyst.

[1] From *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay. Copyright, 1914, by The Macmillan Company.

He sets the birds to singing,
  And calls the flowers to rise;
The morning cometh, bringing
  Sweet sleep to heavy eyes.

Gold plume and silver plume,
  Comb of coral gay;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
  And summons home the day!

Black fear he sends it flying,
  Black care he drives afar;
And creeping shadows sighing
  Before the morning star.

The birds of all the forest
  Have dear and pleasant cheer,
But yet I hold the rarest
  The farmyard Chanticleer.

Red cock or black cock,
  Gold cock or white,
The flower of all the feathered flock;
  He whistles back the light!

Katherine Tynan

RED ROOSTER[1]

Red rooster in your gray coop,
O stately creature with tail-feathers red and blue,
Yellow and black,
You have a comb gay as a parade

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Poems by a Little Girl* by Hilda Conkling. Copyright, 1920, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

On your head:
You have pearl trinkets
On your feet:
The short feathers smooth along your back
Are the dark color of wet rocks,
Or the rippled green of ships
When I look at their sides through water.
I don't know how you happened to be made
So proud, so foolish,
Wearing your coat of many colors,
Shouting all day long your crooked words,
Loud . . . sharp . . . not beautiful!

Hilda Conkling

(*Written at the age of seven*)

THE HENS

The night was coming very fast;
It reached the gate as I ran past.

The pigeons had gone to the tower of the church
And all the hens were on their perch,

Up in the barn, and I thought I heard
A piece of a little purring word.

I stopped inside, waiting and staying,
To try to hear what the hens were saying.

They were asking something, that was plain,
Asking it over and over again.

One of them moved and turned around,
Her feathers made a ruffled sound,

A ruffled sound, like a bushful of birds,
And she said her little asking words.

She pushed her head close into her wing,
But nothing answered anything.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

FAIRIES AND PHANTOMS

THE FAIRIES

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
  Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
  Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
  Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
  All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray,
  He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses
On his stately journeys
  From Slieveleague to Rosses;

Or going up with music
  On cold, starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
  Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow,
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lake,
On a bed of flag leaves,
Watching till she wake.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

William Allingham

THE FAIRIES

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
It's not so very, very far away;
You pass the gardener's shed and you just keep straight ahead —
I do so hope they've really come to stay.
There's a little wood, with moss in it and beetles,
And a little stream that quietly runs through;
You wouldn't think they'd dare to come merry-making there —
Well, they do.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
They often have a dance on summer nights;
The butterflies and bees make a lovely little breeze,
And the rabbits stand about and hold the lights.
Did you know that they could sit upon the moonbeams
And pick a little star to make a fan,
And dance away up there in the middle of the air?
Well, they can.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!
You cannot think how beautiful they are;
They all stand up and sing when the Fairy Queen and King
Come gently floating down upon their car.
The King is very proud and *very* handsome;
The Queen — now can you guess who that could be
(She's a little girl all day, but at night she steals away)?
Well — it's Me!

Rose Fyleman

FAIRY-MUSIC

When fiddlers play their tunes, you may sometimes hear,
Very softly chiming in, magically clear,
Magically high and sweet, the tiny crystal notes
Of fairy voices bubbling free from tiny fairy throats.

When the birds at break of day chant their morning prayers,
Or on sunny afternoons pipe ecstatic airs,
Comes an added rush of sound to the silver din —
Songs of fairy troubadours gaily joining in.

When athwart the drowsy fields summer twilight falls,
Through the tranquil air there float elfin madrigals,
And in wild November nights, on the winds astride,
Fairy hosts go rushing by, singing as they ride.

Every dream that mortals dream, sleeping or awake,
Every lovely fragile hope — these the fairies take,
Delicately fashion them and give them back again
In tender, limpid melodies that charm the hearts of men.

Rose Fyleman

I'D LOVE TO BE A FAIRY'S CHILD

Children born of fairy stock
Never need for shirt or frock,
Never want for food or fire,
Always get their heart's desire:
Jingle pockets full of gold,
Marry when they're seven years old.
Every fairy child may keep
Two strong ponies and ten sheep;
All have houses, each his own,

Built of brick or granite stone;
They live on cherries, they run wild —
I'd love to be a Fairy's child.

Robert Graves

IN FAIRYLAND

The fairy poet takes a sheet
  Of moonbeam, silver white;
His ink is dew from daisies sweet,
  His pen a point of light.

My love I know is fairer far
  Than his, (though she is fair,)
And we should dwell where fairies are —
  For I could praise her there.

Joyce Kilmer

SUPPOSE

Suppose . . . and suppose that a wild little Horse of Magic
  Came cantering out of the sky,
With bridle of silver and into the saddle I mounted
  To fly — and to fly.

And we stretched up into the air, fleeting on in the sunshine,
  A speck in the gleam
On galloping hoofs, his mane in the wind out-flowing,
  As if in a dream.

Suppose and suppose, when the gentle star of evening
  Came crinkling into the blue,
A magical castle we saw in the air, like a cloud of moonlight,
  As onward we flew.

And across the green moat on the drawbridge we foamed and we snorted,
And there was a beautiful Queen
Who smiled at me strangely; and spoke to my wild little Horse, too
A lovely and beautiful Queen.

Suppose and suppose she cried to her delicate maidens,
"Behold my daughter — my dear!"
And they crowned me with flowers, and then on their harps sate playing,
Solemn and clear.

And magical cakes and goblets were spread on the table;
And at the window the birds came in;
Hopping along with bright eyes, pecking crumbs from the platters,
And sipped of the wine.

And splashing up — up to the roof, tossed fountains of crystal;
And Princes in scarlet and green
Shot with their bows and arrows, and kneeled with their dishes
Of fruits for the Queen.

And we walked in a magical garden with rivers and bowers,
And my bed was of ivory and gold;
And the Queen breathed soft in my ear a song of enchantment,
And I never grew old . . .

And I never, never came back to the earth, oh, never and never;
How mother would cry and cry.

There'd be snow on the fields then, and all these sweet
flowers in the winter
Would wither and die . . .

Suppose . . . and suppose . . .

Walter De la Mare

THE SHADOW PEOPLE

Old lame Bridget doesn't hear
Fairy music in the grass
When the gloaming's on the mere
And the shadow people pass;
Never hears their slow, grey feet
Coming from the village street
Just beyond the parson's wall,
Where the clover globes are sweet
And the mushroom's parasol
Opens in the moonlit rain.
Every night I hear them call
From their long and merry train.
Old lame Bridget says to me,
"It is just your fancy, child."
She cannot believe I see
Laughing faces in the wild,
Hands that twinkle in the sedge
Where the finny minnows quiver,
Shaping on a blue wave's ledge
Bubble foam to sail the river.
And the sunny hands to me
Beckon ever, beckon ever.
Oh! I would be wild and free
And with the shadow people be.

Francis Ledwidge.

THE SATYRS AND THE MOON

Within the wood behind the hill
The moon got tangled in the trees.
Her splendor made the branches thrill
And thrilled the breeze.

The satyrs in the grotto bent
Their heads to see the wondrous sight.
"It is a god in banishment
That stirs the night!"

The little satyr looked and guessed:
"It is an apple that one sees,
Brought from that garden of the West,
Hesperides."

"It is a cyclops' glaring eye."
"A temple dome from Babylon."
"A Titan's cup of victory."
"A little sun."

The tiny satyr jumped for joy,
And kicked his hoofs in utmost glee.
"It is a wondrous silver toy —
Bring it to me!"

A great wind whistled through the blue
And caught the moon and tossed it high;
A bubble of pale fire it flew
Across the sky.

The satyrs gasped and looked and smiled,
And wagged their heads from side to side,
Except their shaggy little child,
Who cried and cried.

Herbert S. Gorman

HOW TO CATCH UNICORNS

Its cloven hoofprint on the sand
Will lead you — where?
Into a phantasmagoric land —
Beware!

There all the bright streams run up-hill.
The birds on every tree are still.
But from stocks and stones, clear voices come
That should be dumb.

If you have taken along a net,
A noose, a prod,
You'll be waiting in the forest yet . . .
Nid — nod!

In a virgin's lap the beast slept sound,
They say . . . but I —
I think (Is anyone around?)
That's just a lie!

If you have taken a musketoon
To flinders 'twill flash 'neath the wizard moon.
So I should take browned batter-cake,
Hot-buttered inside, like foam to flake.

And I should take an easy heart
And a whimsical face,
And a tied-up lunch of sandwich and tart,
And spread a cloth in the open chase.

And then I should pretend to snore . . .
And I'd hear a snort and I'd hear a roar,
The wind of a mane and a tail, and four

Wild hoofs prancing the forest-floor.
And I'd open my eyes on a flashing horn —
And see the Unicorn!

Paladins fierce and virgins sweet . . .
But he's never had anything to eat!
Knights have tramped in their iron-mong'ry . . .
But nobody thought — that's all! — *he's hungry!*

ADDENDUM

Really hungry! Good Lord deliver us,
The Unicorn is not *carnivorous!*

William Rose Benét

THE ELF AND THE DORMOUSE

Under a toadstool
  Crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain
  To shelter himself.

Under the toadstool,
  Sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse
  All in a heap.

Trembled the wee Elf,
  Frightened, and yet
Fearing to fly away
  Lest he got wet.

To the next shelter —
  Maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf
  Smiled a wee smile.

Tugged till the toadstool
  Toppled in two.
Holding it over him,
  Gaily he flew.

Soon he was safe home,
  Dry as could be.
Soon woke the Dormouse—
  "Good gracious me!

"Where is my toadstool?"
  Loud he lamented.
And that's how umbrellas
  First were invented.

Oliver Herford

LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE [1]

Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups and saucers up, an' brush the crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-an'-keep;
An' all us other children, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-lis'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you
  Ef you
    Don't
      Watch
        Out!

[1] From *Rhymes of Childhood* by James Whitcomb Riley. Copyright, 1890. Used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his pray'rs—
An' when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,
His mammy heerd him holler, an' his daddy heard him bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wasn't there at all!
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an' press,
An' seeked him up the chimney-flue, an' ever'wheres, I guess;
But all they ever found was thist his pants an' roundabout!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
An' onc't when they was "company," an' ole folks was there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed what she's about!
An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lampwick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away, —
You better mind yer parents, and yer teachers fond and dear,
An' cherish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

James Whitcomb Riley

THE MERMAID

I

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

II

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;

And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
"Who is it loves me? who loves not me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown, low adown,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till the great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad seawolds in the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list

Of the bold merry mermen under the sea.
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would marry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea.
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

Alfred Tennyson

ADVENTURE

Black wave the trees in the forest
And a rough wind hurries by,
But the swineherd's toddling daughter
Knows where fallen pine-cones lie.

And girt a snowy apron
She scampers, alert and gay,
To the hidden pool in the hollow
Where the wan witch people play.

They smile, the wee wrinkled women,
They creep to her pinafore;
And lay in her lap strange treasures
Trolls brought from the ocean's floor.

And they marvel at her blonde tresses
  And braid them with scented fern;
And they lave her dusty, brown ankles
  With snow water from the burn.

But nobody listens, or heeds them,
  The swineherd hews a new trail,
The swineherd's wife in the cottage
  Pours the sour milk from the pail.

And little Gerta lags homeward
  Dream shod through the shadows deep;
Her eyelids heavy with wonder —
  They whisper, "She's been asleep."

Laura Benét

WORDS AND MUSIC

ODE

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying,
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

Arthur O'Shaughnessy

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicaean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
  And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
  Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
  Are Holy Land!

Edgar Allan Poe

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
  Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple tree
  Whose boughs are bent with thickest fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
  That paddles in a halcyon sea —
My heart is gladder than all these,
  Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down,
Hang it with vair[1] and purple dyes,
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys,
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.

Christina Georgiana Rossetti

THE CHERRY-BLOSSOM WAND

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,
And carry it in my merciless hand,
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,
With a beautiful thing that shall never grow wise.

Light are the petals that fall from the bough,
And lighter the love that I offer you now;
In a spring day shall the tale be told
Of the beautiful things that will never grow old.

The blossoms shall fall in the night wind,
And I will leave you so, to be kind:
Eternal in beauty are short-lived flowers,
Eternal in beauty, these exquisite hours.

I will pluck from my tree a cherry-blossom wand,
And carry it in my merciless hand,
So I will drive you, so bewitch your eyes,
With a beautiful thing that shall never grow wise.

Anna Wickham

[1] *Vair:* variegated silver and blue.

SONG

(From "The Land of Heart's Desire")

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away,
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;

For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
'The lonely of heart is withered away.'

William Butler Yeats

SONG

"Oh! Love," they said, "is King of Kings,
  And Triumph is his crown.
Earth fades in flame before his wings,
  And Sun and Moon bow down."—
But that, I knew, would never do;
  And Heaven is all too high.
So whenever I meet a Queen, I said,
  I will not catch her eye.

"Oh! Love," they said, and "Love," they said,
  "The gift of Love is this;
A crown of thorns about thy head,

And vinegar to thy kiss! "—
But Tragedy is not for me;
And I'm content to be gay.
So whenever I spied a Tragic Lady,
I went another way.

And so I never feared to see
You wander down the street,
Or come across the fields to me
On ordinary feet.
For what they'd never told me of,
And what I never knew;
It was that all the time, my love,
Love would be merely you.

Rupert Brooke

PORTRAIT OF A GIRL

This is the shape of the leaf, and this of the flower,
And this the pale bole of the tree
Which watches its bough in a pool of unwavering water
In a land we never shall see.

The thrush on the bough is silent, the dew falls softly,
In the evening is hardly a sound.
And the three beautiful pilgrims who come here together
Touch lightly the dust of the ground,

Touch it with feet that trouble the dust but as wings do,
Come shyly together, are still,
Like dancers who wait, in a pause of the music, for music
The exquisite silence to fill. . . .

This is the thought of the first, and this of the second,
And this the grave thought of the third:
'Linger we thus for a moment, palely expectant,
And silence will end, and the bird

'Sing the pure phrase, sweet phrase, clear phrase in the twilight
To fill the blue bell of the world;
And we, who on music so leaflike have drifted together,
Leaflike apart shall be whirled

'Into what but the beauty of silence, silence forever?'. . .
. . . This is the shape of the tree,
And the flower, and the leaf, and the three pale beautiful pilgrims;
This is what you are to me.

Conrad Aiken

"THE NIGHT WILL NEVER STAY"[1]

The night will never stay,
The night will still go by,
Though with a million stars
You pin it to the sky,
Though you bind it with the blowing wind
And buckle it with the moon,
The night will slip away
Like sorrow or a tune.

Eleanor Farjeon

[1] By permission from *Gypsy and Ginger* by Eleanor Farjeon. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

HOW MANY TIMES

How many times do I love thee, dear?
Tell me how many thoughts there be
In the atmosphere
Of a new-fall'n year,
Whose white and sable hours appear
The latest flake of Eternity;
So many times do I love thee, dear.

How many times do I love, again?
Tell me how many beads there are
In a silver chain
Of the evening rain,
Unravelled from the tumbling main,
And threading the eye of a yellow star:
So many times do I love again.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes

BLOW, BUGLE, BLOW

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

Alfred Tennyson

FOR THEM ALL

At night through the city in a song
Like a cloud I drift along.

I slip into the shop-girl's room,
Soothing her eyes amid the gloom.

I smooth the wrinkles on the cheek
Of the white mother, worn and meek.

Where the laborer sits at rest,
I pour sweet dreams into his breast.

The old man and the little child
Bending o'er the page have smiled.

Into the lover's heart I stream,
Like the belovèd in a dream.

The poet and the lover, too,
I drench with beauty through and through.

I am Beauty's, and I move
Lonely amid those I love.

O, poet, lover, mother, child!
For love of you my heart is wild.

Out of this very page I cry
Up to your spirits: this is I!

Are we together here at last?
O catch me up before 'tis past!

O hold me close against your breast!
There alone, at last, I rest.

John Hall Wheelock

NIRVANA

Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
  Over the stars that murmur as they go
  Lighting your lattice-window far below—
And every star some of the glory spells
Whereof I know.

I have forgotten you, long, long ago,
  Like the sweet, silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

John Hall Wheelock

THE WORDS

Little Words that wear silk dresses
And go to tea-parties:
"How darling!" "How perfectly dear!"
"You really did? . . . Marvelous!"
When they come away,
They take off their little silk mittens

And fold up their poke bonnets.
Then they are pansies and violets.
And some carry fragrance
Of mignonette in their pockets.

Out in the world are their cousins:

Tall Words that rise up like towers.
Slender Words ticking the hours.
Feather Words that mount seeds
In the flower pods.
Weather Words that count beads
On the hour-rods.
Merry Words that muse.
Tarry Words that lose.
Cloudy Words that send the rain.
Rowdy Words that tend a pain.
Linnet Words that seek a rare clime.
Minute Words that keep a fair time.
Morning Words that comb the hair high.
Adorning Words that roam the air nigh.
Wing Words that sing the little loves.
Spring Words that bring the little doves.
Mother Words that string the lyre.
Brother Words that bring the fire.
Willow Words that bind the nest.
Pillow Words that find a rest.
Long Words that bird the sleep.
Song Words that herd the sheep.
And when the fair "Good Night" is said,
Some Words climb the stair
And rhyme in turn to bed.

Opal Whiteley

LIGHT

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

F. W. Bourdillon

AT THE SYMPHONY

The 'cellos, setting forth apart,
Grumbled and sang, and so the day,
From the low beaches of my heart,
Turned in tranquility away.

And over weariness and doubt
Rose up the horns like bellied sails,
Like canvas of the soul flung out
To rising and orchestral gales;

Passed on and left irresolute
The ebony, the silver throat. . .
Low over clarinet and flute
Hung heaven upon a single note.

Robert Nathan

THE SINGER

If I had peace to sit and sing,
Then I could make a lovely thing;
But I am stung with goads and whips,
So I build songs like iron ships.

Let it be something for my song,
If it is sometimes swift and strong.

Anna Wickham

WHIMS AND FANTASIES

FOUR MOON POEMS[1]

EUCLID

Old Euclid drew a circle
On a sand-beach long ago.
He bounded and enclosed it
With angles thus and so.
His set of solemn greybeards
Nodded and argued much
Of arc and of circumference,
Diameter and such.
A silent child stood by them
From morning until noon
Because they drew such charming
Round pictures of the moon.

WHAT THE RATTLESNAKE SAID

The moon's a little prairie-dog.
He shivers through the night.
He sits upon his hill and cries
For fear that I will bite.

The sun's a broncho. He's afraid
Like every other thing,
And trembles, morning, noon and night,
Lest I should spring, and sting!

[1] From *The Congo and Other Poems* by Vachel Lindsay. Copyright, 1914, by the Macmillan Company.

The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky

(What the Little Girl Said)

The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky.
He bites it, day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker,
He kneads clouds in his den,
And bakes a crisp new moon *that . . . greedy North . . . Wind . . . eats . . . again!*

Yet Gentle Will the Griffin Be

(What Grandpa told the Children)

The moon? It is a griffin's egg,
Hatching to-morrow night.
And how the little boys will watch
With shouting and delight
To see him break the shell and stretch
And creep across the sky.
The boys will laugh. The little girls,
I fear, may hide and cry.
Yet gentle will the griffin be,
Most decorous and fat,
And walk up to the milky way . . .
And lap it like a cat.

Vachel Lindsay

A HILLSIDE THAW

To think to know the country and not know
The hillside on the day the sun lets go
Ten million silver lizards out of snow.
As often as I've seen it done before
I can't pretend to tell the way it's done.
It looks as if some magic of the sun
Lifted the rug that bred them on the floor
And the light breaking on them made them run.
But if I thought to stop the wet stampede,
And caught one silver lizard by the tail,
And put my foot on one without avail,
And threw myself wet-elbowed and wet-kneed
In front of twenty others' wriggling speed, —
In the confusion of them all aglitter
And birds that joined in the excited fun
By doubling and redoubling song and twitter,
I have no doubt I'd end by holding none.

It takes the moon for this. The sun's a wizard
By all I tell; but so's the moon a witch.
From the high west she makes a gentle cast
And suddenly without a jerk or twitch
She has her spell on every single lizard.
I fancied when I looked at eight o'clock
The swarm still ran and scuttled just as fast.
The moon was waiting for her chill effect.
I looked at ten: the swarm was turned to rock
In every life-like posture of the swarm,
Transfixed on mountain slopes almost erect.
Across each other and side by side they lay.
The spell that so could hold them as they were

Was wrought through trees without a breath of storm
To make a leaf, if there had been one, stir.
It was the moon's. She held them until day,
One lizard at the end of every ray.
The thought of my attempting such a stay!

Robert Frost

APPARITIONS

I

Such a starved bank of moss
  Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
  Violets were born!

II

Sky — what a scowl of cloud
  Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
  Splendid, a star!

III

World — how it walled about
  Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
  That was thy face!

Robert Browning

ISRAFEL

(And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures. —*Koran*)

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
  Whose heart-strings are a lute;
None sing so wildly well

As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
  Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
  In her highest noon,
  The enamoured moon
Blushes with love,
  While, to listen, the red levin[1]
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
  Which were seven)
  Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
  And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
  By which he sits and sings,
The trembling living wire
  Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
  Where deep thoughts are a duty,
Where Love's a grown-up God,
Where the Houri glances are
  Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore thou art not wrong,
  Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
  Best bard, because the wisest:
Merrily live, and long!

[1] *Levin:* a poetic word for lightning.

The ecstacies above
  With thy burning measures suit:
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
  With the fervor of thy lute —
  Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
  Is a world of sweets and sours;
  Our flowers are merely — flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
  Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
  Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
  A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
  From my lyre within the sky.

Edgar Allan Poe

FANTASY

A bird ran up the onyx steps of night,
  Seeking the moon upon her silver throne;
But stars confused him with their insolent light
  And left him in the friendless skies, alone.

He watched the winds, disheveled and awry,
  Hurling the clouds, like pillows from their beds;
He saw the mountain-peaks that nudged the sky,
  Take off the wreaths of sunset from their heads.

He heard the storms, a troupe of headstrong boys,
(Locked up as punishment for howling tears)
Beat on the ebony doors with such a noise,
That all the angels had to hold their ears.

Frightened, he left the halls of thundering sound
For a less dazzling height, a lowlier dream. . .
And, perching on a watery bough, he found
The moon, her white laugh rippling from the stream.

Louis Untermeyer

THREE PICTURES

Wistaria Blossoms

I see them on my trellises and walls
And straightway dream of distant waterfalls;
But when to distant waterfalls I roam
I dream of my wistarias at home.

Almond Blossoms

A rosy cloud of the dawn I see
Entangled there in the almond tree!

A Snowfall on Plum Trees After They had Bloomed

It is, indeed, a pleasant thing to know
Twice-flowering plum trees in my garden grow.

Charles Dalmon

THEOLOGY

The blade is sharp, the reaper stout,
And every daisy dies.
Their souls are fluttering about —
We call them butterflies.

Joyce Kilmer

APES AND IVORY

Apes and ivory, skulls and roses, in junks of old Hong-Kong,
Gliding over a sea of dreams to a haunted shore of song,
Masts of gold and sails of satin, shimmering out of the East,
Oh, Love has little need of you now to make his heart a feast.

Or is it an elephant, white as milk and bearing a severed head
That tatters his broad soft wrinkled flanks in tawdry patches of red,
With a negro giant to walk beside and a temple dome above,
Where ruby and emerald shatter the sun, — is it these that should please my love?

Or is it a palace of pomegranates, where ivory-limbed young slaves
Lure a luxury out of the noon in the swooning fountain's waves;

Or couch like cats and sun themselves on the warm white
marble brink?
Oh, Love has little to ask of these, this day in May, I
think.

Is it Lebanon cedars or purple fruits of the honeyed
southern air,
Spikenard, saffron, roses of Sharon, cinnamon, calamus,
myrrh,
A bed of spices, a fountain of waters, or the wild white
wings of a dove,
Now, when the winter is over and gone, is it these that
should please my love?

The leaves outburst on the hazel-bough and the haw-
thorn's heaped with flower,
And God has bidden the crisp clouds build my love a
lordlier tower,
Taller than Lebanon, whiter than snow, in the fresh blue
skies above;
And the wild rose wakes in the winding lanes of the
radiant land I love.

*Apes and ivory, skulls and roses, in junks of old Hong-
Kong,*
Gliding over a sea of dreams to a haunted shore of song,
*Masts of gold and sails of satin, shimmering out of the
East,*
***Oh, Love has little need of you now to make his heart
a feast.***

Alfred Noyes

CHIMES

Brief, on a flying night
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight,
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt — O hark!
A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing,
Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.

Alice Meynell

A TREE AT DUSK

With secrets in their eyes the blue-winged Hours
Rustle through the meadow
Dropping shadow.

Yawning among red flowers,
The Moon Child with her golden hoop
And a pink star drifting after,
Leans to me where I droop.

I hear her delicate, soft laughter,
And through my hair her tiny fingers creep. . . .

I shall sleep.

Winifred Welles

VARIATIONS ON AN OLD NURSERY RHYME

The King of China's daughter
  So beautiful to see
With her face like yellow water, left
  Her nutmeg tree.

Her little rope for skipping
  She skipped and gave it me —
Made of painted notes of singing-birds
  Among the fields of tea.

I skipped across the nutmeg grove, —
  I skipped across the sea;
But neither sun nor moon, my dear,
  Has yet caught me.

Edith Sitwell

WHIM

When trout swim down Great Ormond Street
And sea-gulls cry above them lightly
And hawthorns heave cold flagstones up
To blossom whitely

Against old walls of houses there,
Gustily shaking out in moonlight
Their country sweetness on sweet air;
And in the sunlight

By the green margin of that water
Children dip white feet and shout,
Casting nets in the braided water
To catch the trout:

Then I shall hold my breath and die,
Swearing I never loved you; no,
'You were not lovely!' I shall cry,
'I never loved you so.'

Conrad Aiken

BLOOM

When flowers thrust their head above the ground
in showers pale as raindrops, and as round,
who would suspect that such, before they're gone,
could hold the sun?

So fine a pressure from above can bring
so frail a thing to push its way aloft? —
through clay, a woman might consider cloth
for constant stitching?

Right straight down and right straight up again,
through holes so close, no manly eye can see
the bloom come out of needles — or can she
be using rain?

And now that she still labours in the gloom,
her room just lighted by the sun turned moon —
need any man be told what flowers are,
that hold a star?

Alfred Kreymborg

CAPRICCIO

I shall have pearls blacker than caviar,
Rubies such as a ripe pomegranate bleeds,
Gold pale as honey dripping from a star,
Brought me by slaves like snow and apple-seeds.

I shall have linen smooth as pigeons' throats,
I shall have purple more than sunset-red,
The velvet leap of leopards to my boats,
The fragrance of the cedars to my bed.

I shall have music stronger than the wind
And sweeter than a Chinese apricot.
In gardens like translucent melon-rind
I shall have dreams as sharp as bergamot.

Before my throning presence, emperors
Will stand abashed as troubled children do.
I shall not smile though every knee defers,
But bid them go, bid them bring night, and you.

Babette Deutsch

A PHANTASY OF HEAVEN

Perhaps he plays with cherubs now,
  Those little, golden boys of God,
Bending, with them, some silver bough,
  The while a seraph, head a-nod,

Slumbers on guard; how they will run
  And shout, if he should wake too soon, —
As fruit more golden than the sun
  And riper than the full-grown moon,

Conglobed in clusters, weighs them down,
  Like Atlas heaped with starry signs.
And, if they're tripped, heel over crown,
  By hidden coils of mighty vines, —

Perhaps the seraph, swift to pounce,
  Will hale them, vexed, to God — and He
Will only laugh, remembering, once
  He was a boy in Galilee!

Harry Kemp

DICK SAID:

(*Concerning Heaven*)

Well, Heaven's hard to understand —
But it's a kind of great, big land
  All full of gold and glory;
With rivers green and pink and red,
And houses made of gingerbread
  Like in the fairy story.

The floors they use are made of clouds;
And there are crowds and crowds and crowds
  Who sing and dance till seven.
But then they must keep still because
God and the Dream-Man and Santa Claus
  Sleep in the big House of Heaven.

God, He sleeps on the first two floors;
And the Dream-Man sleeps above Him and snores,
  A tired-out story-teller;
And Santa Claus, who hates the noise,
He sleeps on the roof with all of his toys —
  And the angels live in the cellar.

Now, the angels never sleep a wink,
They're much too busy to stop and think
  Or play on harps and guitars.
They're always cleaning the sun at night,
And all day long, to keep them bright,
  They polish the moon and the stars.

They clean the streets and they tidy the rooms,
And they sweep out Heaven with a million brooms,
And they hurry each other when they nod,
And they work so fast that they almost fall —
But God just sits and never works at all;
And that's because He's God!

Louis Untermeyer

SEA SHELL

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing me a song, O please!
A song of ships, and sailor men,
And parrots, and tropical trees,

Of islands lost in the Spanish Main
Which no man ever may find again,
Of fishes and corals under the waves,
And sea-horses stabled in great green caves.

Sea Shell, Sea Shell,
Sing of the things you know so well.

Amy Lowell

A COMPARISON

Apple blossoms look like snow,
They're different, though.
Snow falls softly, but it brings
Noisy things:
Sleighs and bells, forts and fights,
Cosy nights.

But apple blossoms when they go,
White and slow,
Quiet all the orchard space,
Till the place
Hushed with falling sweetness seems
Filled with dreams.

John Farrar

BALLADE OF BLUE CHINA

There's a joy without canker or cark,
  There's a pleasure eternally new,
'Tis to gloat on the glaze and the mark
  Of china that's ancient and blue;
  Unchipp'd all the centuries through
It has pass'd since the chime of it rang,
  And they fashion'd it, figure and hue,
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

These dragons (their tails, you remark,
  Into bunches of gillyflowers grew),—
When Noah came out of the ark,
  Did these lie in wait for his crew?
  They snorted, they snapp'd and they slew;
They were mighty of fin and of fang,
  And their portraits Celestials drew
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

Here's a pot with a cot in a park,
  In a park where the peach-blossoms blew,
Where the lovers eloped in the dark,
  Lived, died, and were changed into two

Bright birds that eternally flew
Through the boughs of the may, as they sang;
'Tis a tale was undoubtedly true
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

ENVOY

Come, snarl at my ecstasies, do,
Kind critic, your "tongue has a tang,"
But — a sage never heeded a shrew
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

Andrew Lang

SOLITUDE

When you have tidied all the things for the night,
And while your thoughts are fading to their sleep,
You'll pause a moment in the late firelight,
Too sorrowful to weep.

The large and gentle furniture has stood
In sympathetic silence all the day
With that old kindness of domestic wood;
Nevertheless the haunted room will say:
"Someone must be away."

The little dog rolls over half awake,
Stretches his paws, yawns, looking up at you,
Wags his tail very slightly for your sake,
That you may feel he is unhappy too.

A distant engine whistles, or the floor
Creaks, the wandering night-wind bangs a door.

Silence is scattered like a broken glass.
The minutes prick their ears and run about,
Then one by one subside again and pass
Sedately in, monotonously out.

You bend your head and wipe away a tear.
Solitude walks one heavy step more near.

Harold Monro

THE DINKEY-BIRD

In an ocean, 'way out yonder
(As all sapient people know),
Is the land of Wonder-Wander,
Whither children love to go;
It's their playing, romping, swinging,
That give great joy to me
While the Dinkey-Bird goes singing
In the amfalula tree!

There the gum-drops grow like cherries
And taffy's thick as peas —
Caramels you pick like berries
When, and where, and how you please;
Big red sugar-plums are clinging
To the cliffs beside that sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

So when children shout and scamper
And make merry all the day,
When there's naught to put a damper
To the ardor of their play;
When I hear their laughter ringing,
Then I'm sure as sure can be
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

For the Dinkey-Bird's bravuras
And staccatos are so sweet —
His roulades, appoggiaturas,[1]
And robustos so complete,
That the youth of every nation —
Be they near or far away —
Have especial delectation
In that gladsome roundelay.

Their eyes grow bright and brighter
Their lungs begin to crow,
Their hearts get light and lighter,
And their cheeks are all aglow;
For an echo cometh bringing
The news to all and me,
That the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree.

I'm sure you like to go there
To see your feathered friend —
And so many goodies grow there
You would like to comprehend!
Speed, little dreams, your winging
To that land across the sea
Where the Dinkey-Bird is singing
In the amfalula tree!

Eugene Field

[1] These are the little twists, runs and shades in singing.

I WONDER WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE DROWNED?

Look at my knees,
That island rising from the steamy seas!
The candle's a tall lightship; my two hands
Are boats and barges anchored to the sands,
With mighty cliffs all round;
They're full of wine and riches from far lands. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

I can make caves,
By lifting up the island and huge waves
And storms, and then with head and ears well under
Blow bubbles with a monstrous roar like thunder,
A bull-of-Bashan sound.
The seas run high and the boats split asunder. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

The thin soap slips
And slithers like a shark under the ships.
My toes are on the soap-dish — that's the effect
Of my huge storms; an iron steamer's wrecked!
The soap slides round and round;
He's biting the old sailors, I expect. . . .
I wonder what it feels like to be drowned?

Robert Graves

TALES AND BALLADS

LITTLE BREECHES

I don't go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will, and that sort of thing,—
But I believe in God and the angels,
Ever sence one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe came along,—
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong,
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight,—
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker
Just to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
And I passed by Taggart's store;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started,—
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie,
I was almost froze with skeer;
But we rousted up some torches,
And sarched for 'em far and near.

At last we struck hosses and wagon,
  Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat, — but of little Gabe
  No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,
  Of my fellow-critter's aid, —
I jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,
  Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

. . . . . .

By this, the torches was played out,
  And me and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
  That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
  Where they shut up the lambs at night.
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
  So warm and sleepy and white;
And thar sot Little Breeches and chirped,
  As peart as ever you see,
"I want a chaw of terbacker,
  And that's what's the matter of me."

How did he git thar? Angels.
  He could never have walked in that storm.
They jest scooped down and toted him
  To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child,
  And bringing him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
  Than loafing around The Throne.

John Hay

DANNY DEEVER

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Color-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can 'ear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square — they're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard!" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" says Files-on-Parade.
"A touch of sun, a touch of sun," the Color-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneaking', shooting hound —
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the morning'.

"'Is cot was right 'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
"E's sleepin' out an' far to-night," the Color-Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.

"E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Color-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' — you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin' the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Color-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Color-Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quick-step play,
The regiments in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

Rudyard Kipling

DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?)
Slung between the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin'
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe,
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listen' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag's flyin',
They shall find him, ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago.

Henry Newbolt

THE HORSE THIEF

There he moved, cropping the grass at the purple canyon's lip.
His mane was mixed with the moonlight that silvered his snow-white side,
For the moon sailed out of a cloud with the wake of a spectral ship.
I crouched and I crawled on my belly, my lariat coil looped wide.

Dimly and dark the mesas broke on the starry sky.
A pall covered every color of their gorgeous glory at noon.
I smelt the yucca and mesquite, and stifled my heart's quick cry,
And wormed and crawled on my belly to where he moved against the moon!

Some Moorish barb was that mustang's sire. His lines were beyond all wonder.
From the prick of his ears to the flow of his tail he ached in my throat and eyes.
Steel and velvet grace! As the prophet says, God had "clothed his neck with thunder."
Oh, marvelous with the drifting cloud he drifted across the skies!

And then I was near at hand — crouched, and balanced, and cast the coil;
And the moon was smothered in cloud, and the rope through my hands with a rip!
But somehow I gripped and clung, with the blood in my brain a-boil, —
With a turn round the rugged tree-stump there on the purple canyon's lip.

Right into the stars he reared aloft, his red eye rolling and raging.
He whirled and sunfished and lashed, and rocked the earth to thunder and flame.
He squealed like a regular devil horse. I was haggard and spent and aging —
Roped clean, but almost storming clear, his fury too fierce to tame.

And I cursed myself for a tenderfoot moon-dazzled to play the part,
But I was doubly desperate then, with the posse pulled out from town,
Or I'd never have tried it. I only knew I must get a mount and a start.
The filly had snapped her foreleg short. I had had to shoot her down.

So there he struggled and strangled, and I snubbed him around the tree.
Nearer, a little nearer — hoofs planted, and lolling tongue —
Till a sudden slack pitched me backward. He reared right on top of me.
Mother of God — that moment! He missed me . . . and up I swung.

Somehow, gone daft completely and clawing a bunch of his mane,
As he stumbled and tripped in the lariat, there I was — up and astride
And cursing for seven counties! And the mustang? *Just insane!*
Crack-bang! went the rope; we cannoned off the tree — then — gods, that ride!

A rocket — that's all, a rocket! I dug with my teeth and nails.
Why, we never hit even the high spots (though I hardly remember things),
But I heard a monstrous booming like a thunder of flapping sails
When he spread — well, *call* me a liar! — when he spread those wings, those wings!

So white that my eyes were blinded, thick-feathered and wide unfurled,
They beat the air into billows. We sailed, and the earth was gone.
Canyon and desert and mesa withered below, with the world.
And then I knew that mustang; for I —was Bellerophon!

Yes, glad as the Greek, and mounted on a horse of the elder gods,
With never a magic bridle or a fountain-mirror nigh!
My chaps and spurs and holster must have looked it?
What's the odds?
I'd a leg over lightning and thunder, careering across the sky!

And forever streaming before me, fanning my forehead cool,
Flowed a mane of molten silver; and just before my thighs
(As I gripped his velvet-muscled ribs, while I cursed myself for a fool),
The steady pulse of those pinions — their wonderful fall and rise!

The bandanna I bought in Bowie blew loose and whipped from my neck.
My shirt was stuck to my shoulders and ribboning out behind.
The stars were dancing, wheeling and glancing, dipping with smirk and beck.
The clouds were flowing, dusking and glowing. We rode a roaring wind.

We soared through the silver starlight to knock at the planets' gates.
New shimmering constellations came whirling into our ken.
Red stars and green and golden swung out of the void that waits
For man's great last adventure; the Signs took shape — and then

I knew the lines of that Centaur the moment I saw him come!
The musical box of the heavens all round us rolled to a tune
That tinkled and chimed and trilled with silver sounds that struck you dumb,
As if some archangel were grinding out the music of the moon.

Melody-drunk on the Milky Way, as we swept and soared hilarious,
Full in our pathway, sudden he stood — the Centaur of the Stars,
Flashing from head and hoofs and breast! I knew him for Sagittarius.
He reared, and bent and drew his bow. He crouched as a boxer spars.

Flung back on his haunches, weird he loomed — then leapt — and the dim void lightened.
Old White Wings shied and swerved aside, and fled from the splendor-shod.
Through a flashing welter of worlds we charged. I knew why my horse was frightened.
He *had* two faces — a dog's and a man's — that Babylonian god!

Also, he followed us real as fear. Ping! went an arrow past.
My broncho buck-jumped, humping high. We plunged . . . I guess that's all!
I lay on the purple canyon's lip, when I opened my eyes at last —
Stiff and sore and my head like a drum, but I broke no bones in the fall.

So you know — and now you may string me up. Such was the way you caught me.
Thank you for letting me tell it straight, though you never could greatly care.
For I took a horse that wasn't mine! . . . But there's one the heavens brought me,
And I'll hang right happy, because I know he is waiting for me up there.

From creamy muzzle to cannon-bone, by God, he's a peerless wonder!
He is steel and velvet and furnace-fire, and death's supremest prize,
And never again shall be roped on earth that neck that is "clothed with thunder. . . ."
String me up, Dave! Go dig my grave! I *rode him across the skies!*

William Rose Benét

A LEGEND OF CHERRIES

Now St. Joseph's cottage stood
Close beside a cherry wood;
And when all the trees grew red
With their dangling fruit, 'tis said,

Jesus, at His mother's gown,
Begged to have the branches down.
All in vain she made reply,
"Mother cannot reach so high,"
For He begged them none the less,
In His perfect childishness.
Joseph, in his workshop near,
Heard the Babe, and would not hear —
Heard the Blessed Virgin say,
"Joseph, pull them down, I pray!"
But he answered, with a frown,
"Let His Father pull them down!"
Then, to Joseph's wonderment,
Every cherry branch was bent;
And Our Lady sweetly smiled,
Picking cherries for her Child.

Charles Dalmon

FROM THE DAY-BOOK OF A FORGOTTEN PRINCE

My father is happy or we should be poor,
His gateway is wide and the folk of the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.

We live in a castle that's dingy and old;
The casements are broken, the corridors cold;
The larder is empty, the cook is a scold.

But father can dance and his singing is loud.
From meadow and highway there's always a crowd
That gathers to hear him, and this makes him proud.

He roars out a song in a voice that is sweet,
Of grandeur that's gone, rare viands to eat,
And treasure that used to be laid at his feet.

He picks up his robe, faded, wrinkled and torn,
Though banded in ermine, moth-eaten and worn,
And held at the throat by a twisted old thorn.

He leaps in the air with a rickety grace
And a kingly old smile illumines his face,
While he fondles his beard and stares off into space.

The villagers laugh, then look quickly away,
And some of them kneel in the orchard to pray.
I often hear whispers: "The old king is fey!"

But after they're gone we shall find, if you please,
White loaves and a pigeon and honey and cheese,
And wine that we drink while I sit on his knees.

And then, while he sups, he will feed me and tell
Of Mother, whom men used to call "The Gazelle,"
And of glorious times before the curse fell.

At last he will sink, half-asleep, to the floor;
The rafters will echo his quivering snore. . . .
I go to find cook through the slack, oaken door.

* * * *

My father is happy or we should be poor;
His gateway is wide and the folk at the moor
Come singing so gaily right up to the door.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?"
Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressalder,
"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.
"At dusk he harries the Abazai — at dawn he is into Bonair,
"But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
"So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
"By the favor of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai,

"But if he be passed the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
"For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
"There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
"And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."

The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell, and the head of the gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat —
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
"Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. "Show now if ye can ride."
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.

The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.

They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course — in a woful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand — small room was there to strive,
"'Twas only by favor of mine," quoth he, "ye rode so long alive:
"There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
"But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
"If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
"The little jackals that flee so fast, were feasting all in a row:
"If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
"The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "Do good to bird and beast,

"But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
"If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
"Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
"They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,
"The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
"But if thou thinkest the price be fair, — thy brethren wait to sup,
"The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn, — howl, dog, and call them up!
"And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
"Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!"
Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
"No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and grey wolf meet.
"May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
"What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "I hold by the blood of my clan:
"Take up the mare for my father's gift — by God, she has carried a man!"
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast,
"We be two strong men," said Kamal then, "but she loveth the younger best.

"So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
"My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain."

The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,
"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he; "will ye take the mate from a friend?"
"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight, "a limb for the risk of a limb.
"Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!"
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest —
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides,
"And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
"Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
"Thy life is his — thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
"So thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
"And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Borderline,
"And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power —
'Belike they will raise thee to Ressalder when I am hanged in Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the halt of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.
The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear —
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
"Ha' done! ha' done!" said the Colonel's son. "Put up the steel at your sides!
"Last night ye had struck at a Border thief — to-night 'tis a man of the Guides!"

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the two shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth.

Rudyard Kipling

A BALLAD OF JOHN SILVER

We were schooner-rigged and rakish, with a long and lissome hull,
And we flew the pretty colours of the cross-bones and the skull;
We'd a big black Jolly Roger flapping grimly at the fore,
And we sailed the Spanish Water in the happy days of yore.

We'd a long brass gun amidships, like a well-conducted ship,
We had each a brace of pistols and a cutlass at the hip;
It's a point which tells against us, and a fact to be deplored,
But we chased the goodly merchant-men and laid their ships aboard.

Then the dead men fouled the scuppers and the wounded filled the chains,
And the paint-work all was spatter-dashed with other people's brains,
She was boarded, she was looted, she was scuttled till she sank,
And the pale survivors left us by the medium of the plank.

O! then it was (while standing by the taffrail on the poop)
We could hear the drowning folk lament the absent chicken-coop;
Then, having washed the blood away, we'd little else to do
Than to dance a quiet hornpipe as the old salts taught us to.

O! the fiddle on the fo'c's'le, and the slapping naked soles,
And the genial 'Down the middle, Jake, and curtsey when she rolls!'
With the silver seas around us and the pale moon overhead,
And the look-out not a-looking and his pipe-bowl glowing red.

Ah! the pig-tailed, quidding pirates and the pretty pranks we played,
All have since been put a stop-to by the naughty Board of Trade;
The schooners and the merry crews are laid away to rest,
A little south the sunset in the Islands of the Blest.

John Masefield

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessèd damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed[1] she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge,
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

[1] *Herseemed:* It seemed to her.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
  Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
  Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
  The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
  Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
  She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
  Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
  Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
  Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
  Down all the echoing stair?)

'I wish that he were come to me,
  For he will come,' she said.
'Have I not prayed in Heaven? — on earth,
  Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
  And shall I feel afraid?

'When round his head the aureole clings,
  And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
  To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
  And bathe there in God's sight.

'We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

'We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

'And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know.'

'We two,' she said, 'will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

'He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

'Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles;
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.[1]

'There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me: —
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he.'

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild, —
'All this is when he comes.' She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, filled
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

[1] *Citherns and citoles:* stringed instruments like the zither and guitar.

THE SLAVE'S DREAM

Beside the ungathered rice he lay
His sickle in his hand;
His breast was bare, his matted hair
Was buried in the sand.
Again, in the mist and shadow of sleep,
He saw his Native Land.

Wide through the landscape of his dreams
The lordly Niger flowed;
Beneath the palm-trees on the plain
Once more a king he strode;
And heard the tinkling caravans
Descend the mountain-road.

He saw once more his dark-eyed queen
Among her children stand;
They clasped his neck, they kissed his cheeks,
They held him by the hand! —
A tear burst from the sleeper's lids
And fell into the sand.

And then at furious speed he rode
Along the Niger's bank;
His bridle-reins were golden chains,
And, with a martial clank,
At each leap he could feel his scabbard of steel
Smiting his stallion's flank.

Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight,
O'er plains where the tamarind grew,

Till he saw the roofs of Caffre huts,
And the ocean rose to view.

At night he heard the lion roar,
And the hyæna scream,
And the river-horse, as he crushed the reeds
Beside some hidden stream;
And it passed, like a glorious roll of drums,
Through the triumph of his dream.

The forests, with their myriad tongues,
Shouted of liberty;
And the Blast of the Desert cried aloud,
With a voice so wild and free,
That he started in his sleep and smiled
At their tempestuous glee.

He did not feel the driver's whip,
Nor the burning heat of the day;
For Death had illumined the Land of Sleep,
And his lifeless body lay
A worn-out fetter, that the soul
Had broken and thrown away!

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

WILLY WINKIE

Wee Willy Winkie,
Runs through the town,
Upstairs and downstairs
In his night-gown,
Tapping at the window,
Peeping at the lock: —
"Are all the babies gone to bed?
It's now ten o'clock!"

Then when noises all are still,
Lamps all burn low,
Bolted doors and windows creak,
Open — and tiptoe,
With his lanthorn and his staff,
Grimly night-gowned,
Like a watchman of the Night
Winkie goes his round.

For of all the Angel guard,
Time out of mind,
He it is hath had in charge
All Baby-kind,
From the mud-lark, fast asleep
On bare curbstone,
To the puppet, plump and pink,
Heir to the throne.

So when steeple clocks have tolled
Sleep-time at hand,
When mammas and nurses rub
Eyes full of sand:
Silver rattles all are hushed,
Pink lids all furled,
Winkie comes to oversee
His little world.

Ay! but there is much to do
For boys and girls:
Wee bald heads to trim with floss,
Empty mouths with pearls,
Little pudding legs to mould
Into human shapes;
General repairs besides:
Scratches and scrapes.

There is much to teach likewise
To girls and boys,
How to caterwaul for pins,
And crow for toys,
How to clutch at pleasant beards
Coming too close,
How to neatly cram the mouth
With fists and toes.

Then reports to be received
From baby friends,
Litter'd all about the place
In odds and ends,
Rattles, rings and rag-dolls
Cast on the shelves,
Shoes and socks, that sulk because
Left to themselves.

Then if he make up his mind
From what they tell,
Baby, where its lines have fall'n,
Isn't faring well.
Presto! Wee wee Winkie
Bends o'er the bed,
Picks up Baby, and away! . . .
Some think it dead:

But the sly old watchman
Winkie knows best,
He has made for some bleak home
With no baby bless'd,
There he lays his charge to sleep,
And with the morn,
There is much to-do about
Baby, New-born.

Upstairs and down, he goes
In his night-gown,
Till the Day comes peeping
Into the town;
Then he throws all shutters wide,
Lets down the bars. . . .
Goodnight, Watchman! Off he flies
To blow out the stars.

Daniel Henry Holmes

THE SANDS OF DEE

'O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee;'
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land:
And never home came she.

'Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair —
A tress of golden hair,
A drowned maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee.'

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea:
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee.

Charles Kingsley

THE PURITAN'S BALLAD

My love came up from Barnegat,
The sea was in his eyes;
He trod as softly as a cat
And told me terrible lies.

His hair was yellow as new-cut pine
In shavings curled and feathered;
I thought how silver it would shine
By cruel winters weathered.

But he was in his twentieth year,
This time I'm speaking of;
We were head over heels in love with fear
And half a-feared of love.

My hair was piled in a copper crown —
A devilish living thing,
And the tortoise-shell pins fell down, fell down,
When that snake uncoiled to spring.

His feet were used to treading a gale
And balancing thereon;
His face was brown as a foreign sail
Threadbare against the sun.

His arms were thick as hickory logs
  Whittled to little wrists;
Strong as the teeth of terrier dogs
  Were the fingers of his fists.

Within his arms I feared to sink
  Where lions shook their manes,
And dragons drawn in azure ink
  Leapt quickened by his veins.

Dreadful his strength and length of limb
  As the sea to foundering ships;
I dipped my hands in love for him
  No deeper than their tips.

But our palms were welded by a flame
  The moment we came to part,
And on his knuckles I read my name
  Enscrolled within a heart.

And something made our wills to bend
  As wild as trees blown over;
We were no longer friend and friend,
  But only lover and lover.

"In seven weeks or seventy years —
  God grant it may be sooner! —
I'll make a handkerchief for your tears
  From the sails of my captain's schooner.

We'll wear our loves like wedding rings
  Long polished to our touch;
We shall be busy with other things
  And they cannot bother us much.

When you are skimming the wrinkled cream
  And your ring clinks on the pan,
You'll say to yourself in a pensive dream,
  'How wonderful a man!'

When I am slitting a fish's head
  And my ring clanks on the knife,
I'll say with thanks, as a prayer is said,
  'How beautiful a wife!'

And I shall fold my decorous paws
  In velvet smooth and deep,
Like a kitten that covers up its claws
  To sleep and sleep and sleep.

Like a little blue pigeon you shall bow
  Your bright alarming crest;
In the crook of my arm you'll lay your brow
  To rest and rest and rest."

Will he never come back from Barnegat
  With thunder in his eyes,
Treading as soft as a tiger cat,
  To tell me terrible lies?

Elinor Wylie

WHOOPEE TI YI YO

As I was a-walking one morning for pleasure,
  I spied a cow-puncher all riding along;
His hat was throwed back and his spurs was a-jingling,
  And he approached me, a-singing this song:

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,[1]
It's your misfortune, and none of my own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

Early in spring we round up the dogies,
Mark 'em and brand 'em and bob off their tails;
Round up the horses, load up the chuck-wagon,
Then throw the dogies upon the old trail.

It's whooping and yelling and driving the dogies;
Oh, how I wish you would all go on!
It's whooping and punching and "Go on, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home."

Oh, you'll be soup for Uncle Sam's Injuns,—
It's "beef, heap beef," I hear them cry.
Git along, git along, git along, little dogies,
You're going to be beef steers by and by.

Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
It's your misfortune, and none of my own.
Whoopee ti yi yo, git along, little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.

American Cowboy Ballad

FATHER GILLIGAN

The old priest Peter Gilligan
Was weary night and day,
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sod lay.

[1] *dogies*: young cattle.

Once while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth-hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die";
And after cried he, "God forgive!
My body spake, not I!"

And then, half-lying on the chair,
He knelt, prayed, fell asleep;
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind;
And God covered the world with shade,
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow-chirp
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.

"*Mavrone, mavrone!* the man has died,
While I slept on the chair";
He roused his horse out of its sleep,
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door:
"Father! you come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried.
"He died an hour ago."
The old priest Peter Gilligan
In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone he turned and died,
As merry as a bird."
The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at that word.

"He who hath made the night of stars
For souls who tire and bleed,
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need.

"He who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in his care,
Had pity on the least of things
Asleep upon a chair."

William Butler Yeats

THE HIGHWAYMAN [1]

Part One

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding —
Riding — riding —
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Collected Poems, Vol. I*, by Alfred Noyes. Copyright, 1913, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace
at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to
the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark
inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was
locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be
waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler[1] listened; his face was white and
peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say —

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-
night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morn-
ing light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the
day,

[1] *Ostler:* one who takes care of the horses, a groom.

Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

Part Two

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching —
Marching — marching —
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;

For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her. She heard the dead man say—
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;

And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up straight and still!

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him — with her death.

He turned; he spurred to the West; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew grey to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

* * * * * * *

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding —
Riding — riding —
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

Alfred Noyes

LAUGHING LEGENDS

EVROPA
FRIGIDA
APHRICA
ATLAS
ASIA
hierusa
alexandria
aethiopia
babil
INDIA
ALVEVS OCEANI
ANTIPODVM
NOBIS,
INCOGNITA

THE LOST SHOE

Poor little Lucy
By some mischance,
Lost her shoe
As she did dance:
'Twas not on the stairs,
Not in the hall;
Not where they sat
At supper at all.
She looked in the garden,
But there it was not;
Henhouse, or kennel,
Or high dovecote.
Dairy and meadow,
And wild woods through
Showed not a trace
Of Lucy's shoe.
Bird nor bunny
Nor glimmering moon
Breathed a whisper
Of where 'twas gone.
It was cried and cried,
Oyez and Oyez!
In French, Dutch, Latin,
And Portuguese.
Ships the dark seas
Went plunging through,
But none brought news
Of Lucy's shoe;
And still she patters
In silk and leather,

O'er snow, sand, shingle,
In every weather;
Spain, and Africa,
Hindustan,
Java, China,
And lamped Japan;
Plain and desert,
She hops — hops through,
Pernambuco
To gold Peru;
Mountain and forest,
And river too,
All the world over
For her lost shoe.

Walter De la Mare

THE OLD NURSE'S SONG

Ptolemy, poor Ptolemy,
In a dusty room doth lie —
Beggars for his bedfellows,
Pence upon his eye.
The old men spend his money,
The nursemaids eat his honey —
But no one knows at all, my dear,
Where Ptolemy doth lie.
The moon, a milk-white unicorn,
She chased me round the town:
She chased me up — and chased me down —
She whistled through her horn:
"Go and listen at the keyhole

When the cold wind blows —
It's Ptolemy, poor Ptolemy,
A-snoring through his nose."

Edith Sitwell

THE TWINS

In form and feature, face and limb,
I grew so like my brother,
That folks got taking me for him,
And each for one another.
It puzzled all our kith and kin,
It reached an awful pitch;
For one of us was born a twin,
Yet not a soul knew which.

One day (to make the matter worse),
Before our names were fixed,
As we were being washed by nurse
We got completely mixed;
And thus, you see, by Fate's decree,
(Or rather nurse's whim),
My brother John got christened *me*,
And I got christened *him*.

This fatal likeness even dogg'd
My footsteps when at school,
And I was always getting flogg'd,
For John turned out a fool.
I put this question hopelessly
To every one I knew —
What *would* you do, if you were me,
To prove that you were *you*?

Our close resemblance turned the tide
Of my domestic life;
For somehow my intended bride
Became my brother's wife.
In short, year after year the same
Absurd mistake went on;
And when I died — the neighbors came
And buried brother John!

Henry S. Leigh

THE LITTLE PEACH

A little peach in the orchard grew —
A little peach of emerald hue;
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew,
It grew.

One day, passing the orchard through,
That little peach dawned on the view
Of Johnnie Jones and his sister Sue —
Those two.

Up at the peach a club he threw —
Down from the tree on which it grew
Fell the little peach of emerald hue —
Mon dieu!

She took a bite and he a chew,
And then the trouble began to brew —
Trouble the doctor couldn't subdue —
Too true!

Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue,
And their little souls to the angels flew —
Boo-hoo!

But what of the peach of emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun and wet by the dew?
Ah, well, its mission on earth was through —
Adieu!

Eugene Field

ROBINSON CRUSOE'S STORY

The night was thick and hazy
When the "Piccadilly Daisy"
Carried down the crew and captain in the sea;
And I think the water drowned 'em;
For they never, never found 'em,
And I know they didn't come ashore with me.

Oh! 'twas very sad and lonely
When I found myself the only
Population on this cultivated shore;
But I've made a little tavern
In a rocky little cavern,
And I sit and watch for people at the door.

I spent no time in looking
For a girl to do my cooking,
As I'm quite a clever hand at making stews;
But I had that fellow Friday,
Just to keep the tavern tidy,
And to put a Sunday polish on my shoes.

I have a little garden
That I'm cultivating lard in,
As the things I eat are rather tough and dry;
For I live on toasted lizards,
Prickly pears, and parrot gizzards,
And I'm really very fond of beetle-pie.

The clothes I had were furry,
And it made me fret and worry
When I found the moths were eating off the hair;
And I had to scrape and sand 'em,
And I boiled 'em and I tanned 'em,
Till I got the fine morocco suit I wear.

I sometimes seek diversion
In a family excursion
With the few domestic animals you see;
And we take along a carrot
As refreshment for the parrot,
And a little can of jungleberry tea.

Then we gather as we travel,
Bits of moss and dirty gravel,
And we chip off little specimens of stone;
And we carry home as prizes
Funny bugs, of handy sizes,
Just to give the day a scientific tone.

If the roads are wet and muddy
We remain at home and study,—
For the Goat is very clever at a sum,—
And the Dog, instead of fighting,
Studies ornamental writing,
While the Cat is taking lessons on the drum.

We retire at eleven,
And we rise again at seven;
And I wish to call attention, as I close,
To the fact that all the scholars
Are correct about their collars,
And particular in turning out their toes.

Charles E. Carryl

THE BALLAD OF THE BILLYCOCK

It was the good ship *Billycock,* with thirteen men aboard,
Athirst to grapple with their country's foes, —
A crew, 'twill be admitted, not numerically fitted
To navigate a battleship in prose.

It was the good ship *Billycock* put out from Plymouth Sound,
While lustily the gallant heroes cheered,
And all the air was ringing with the merry bo'sun's singing,
Till in the gloom of night she disappeared.

But when the morning broke on her, behold, a dozen ships,
A dozen ships of France around her lay,
(Or, if that isn't plenty, I will gladly make it twenty),
And hemmed her close in Salamander Bay.

Then to the Lord High Admiral there spake a cabin-boy:
"Methinks," he said, "the odds are somewhat great,
And, in the present crisis, a cabin-boy's advice is
That you and France had better arbitrate!"

"Pooh!" said the Lord High Admiral, and slapped his manly chest,
"Pooh! That would be both cowardly and wrong;
Shall I, a gallant fighter, give the needy ballad-writer
No suitable material for song?

"Nay — is the shorthand-writer here? — I tell you, one and all,
I mean to do my duty, as I ought;
With eager satisfaction let us clear the decks for action
And fight the craven Frenchmen!" So they fought.

And (after several stanzas which as yet are incomplete,
Describing all the fight in epic style)
When the *Billycock* was going, she'd a dozen prizes towing,
(Or twenty, as above) in single file!

Ah, long in glowing English hearts the story will remain,
The memory of that historic day,
And, while we rule the ocean, we will picture with emotion
The *Billycock* in Salamander Bay!

P.S. — I've lately noticed that the critics — who, I think,
In praising *my* productions are remiss —
Quite easily are captured, and profess themselves enraptured,
By patriotic ditties such as this,

For making which you merely take some dauntless Englishmen,
Guns, heroism, slaughter, and a fleet —
Ingredients you mingle in a metre with a jingle,
And there you have your masterpiece complete!

Why, then, with labour infinite, produce a book of verse
To languish on the "All for Twopence" shelf?
The ballad bold and breezy comes particularly easy —
I mean to take to writing it myself!

Anthony C. Deane

THE HERO COCKROACH

(In the manner of the earlier Kipling)

The Cockroach stood by the mickle wood in the flush of the astral dawn,

And he sniffed the air from the hidden lair where the Khyber swordfish spawn;
The bilge and belch of the glutton Welsh as they smelted their warlock cheese
Surged to and fro where the grinding floe wrenched at the Headland's knees.

Half seas over! Under — up again!
And the barnacles white in the moon!
The pole star's chasing its tail like a pup again,
And the dish runs away with the spoon!

The waterspout came bellowing out of the red horizon's rim,
And the gray Typhoon and the black Monsoon surged forth to the fight with him,
With threefold might they surged to the fight for they hated the great bull Roach; —
And they cried, " Begod! " as they lashed the sod, " And here is an Egg to Poach!

" We will bash his mug with his own raw lug new-stripped from off his dome,
For there is no law but tooth and claw to the nor' nor'east of Nome!
The Punjaub Gull shall have his skull ere he goes to the burning ghaut,
For we have no time for aught but crime where the jungle lore is taught!
Across the dark the Afghan Shark is whinning for his head —
There shall be no rule but death and drool till the deep red maws are fed! "

Half seas under! Up! and down again!
And her keel was blown off in a squall!
Girls, we misdoubt that we'll ever see town again —
Haul, boys! Hall boys! Haul!

The Cockroach spat — and he tilted his hat and he grinned through the lowering murk,
The Cockroach felt in his rangoon belt for his good Bengali dirk,
He reefed his mast against the blast and he bent his mizzen free
And he flung the cleats of his binnacle sheets in the teeth of the yeasty sea!

He opened his mouth and he sluiced his drouth with his last good can of swipes —
"Begod!" he cried, "they come in pride, but they shall go home with the gripes!"
"Begod," he said, "if they want my head it is here on top of my chine —
It shall never be said that I doffed my head for the boast of a heathen line!"
And he scorned to wait but he dared his fate and loosed his bridle rein
And leapt to close with his red-fanged foes in the trough of the howling main!

Half seas over! Down again and up!
And the cobra is wild with her fleas —
The rajah whines to the pukka's pup,
And there's dirt in the Narrow Seas!

From Hell to Nome the blow went home where the Cockroach struck his foe,

From Nome to Hell the mongeese yell as they see the black
blood flow;
The hawsers snort from the firing port as the conning
chains give way
And the chukkers roar till they rouse the boar on the
hills of Mandalay; —
And the Cockroach said as he tilted his head: "Now, luff!
you beggars, luff!
Begod," says he, "it is easy to see ye cannot swallow my
duff!
I have tickled ye, I have pickled ye, I have scotched your
mizzen brace,
And the charnel shark in the outer dark shall strip the
nose from your face —

"Begod," says he, "it is easy to see that the Narrow Seas
are mine,
So creep ye home to your lair at Nome and patch your
guts with twine!
Begod (says he) it is easy to see who rules this bloody
bight —
Come ye again, my merry men, whenever ye thirst for
fight!"

Half seas over! Stop! She is queasy!
The Cockroach has dropped in the stew!
Honestly, fellows, this stuff is easy!
The trouble's to tell when you're through.

Don Marquis

JIM

There was a Boy whose name was Jim;
His Friends were very good to him.
They gave him Tea, and Cakes, and Jam,
And slices of delicious Ham,
And Chocolate with pink inside
And little Tricycles to ride,
And read him Stories through and through,
And even took him to the Zoo —
But there it was the dreadful Fate
Befell him, which I now relate.

You know — at least you ought to know,
For I have often told you so —
That Children never are allowed
To leave their Nurses in a Crowd;
Now this was Jim's especial Foible,
He ran away when he was able,
And on this inauspicious day
He slipped his hand and ran away!

He hadn't gone a yard when — Bang!
With open Jaws, a Lion sprang,
And hungrily began to eat
The Boy: beginning at his feet.
Now, just imagine how it feels
When first your toes and then your heels,
And then by gradual degrees,
Your shins and ankles, calves and knees,
Are slowly eaten, bit by bit.
No wonder Jim detested it!
No wonder that he shouted "Hi!"

The Honest Keeper heard his cry,
Though very fat he almost ran
To help the little gentleman.
"Ponto!" he ordered as he came
(For Ponto was the Lion's name),
"Ponto!" he cried, with angry Frown,
"Let go, Sir! Down, Sir! Put it down!"
The Lion made a sudden stop,
He let the Dainty Morsel drop,
And slunk reluctant to his Cage,
Snarling with Disappointed Rage.
But when he bent him over Jim,
The Honest Keeper's Eyes were dim.
The Lion having reached his Head,
The Miserable Boy was dead!

When Nurse informed his Parents, they
Were more Concerned than I can say: —
His Mother, as She dried her eyes,
Said, "Well — it gives me no surprise,
He would not do as he was told!"
His Father, who was self-controlled,
Bade all the children round attend
To James's miserable end,
And always keep a-hold of Nurse
For fear of finding something worse.

Hilaire Belloc

THE YARN OF THE "NANCY BELL"

'Twas on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span
That I found alone, on a piece of stone,
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid;
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been drinking,
And so I simply said:

"Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
How you can possibly be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn:

"'Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all o' the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul),
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said 'Here!' to the muster roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.

"For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So, we drawed a lot, and, accordin' shot,
The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, 'Which
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose,
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshipped me;
But we'd both be blowed if we'd either be stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

"'I'll be eat if you dines off me,' says Tom,
'Yes, that,' says I, 'you'll be,'—
'I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I,
And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

"Says he, 'Dear James, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me*,
While I can—and will—cook you!'

"So, he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped shallot,
And some sage and parsley too.

"'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
'T will soothing be if I let you see
How extremely nice you'll smell.'

"And he stirred it round and round and round,
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
In the scum of the boiling broth.

"And I eat that cook in a week or less,
And—as I eating be
The last of his chops, why I almost drops,
For a vessel in sight I see.

. . . . . .

"And I never larf, and I never smile,
And I never lark nor play,
But I sit and croak, and a single joke
I have—which is to say:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig!"

W. S. Gilbert

ELLEN McJONES ABERDEEN

Macphairson Clonglocketty Angus McClan
Was the son of an elderly labouring man;
You've guessed him a Scotchman, shrewd reader, at sight,
And p'r'aps altogether, shrewd reader, you're right.

From the bonnie blue Forth to the beastly Deeside,
Round by Dingwall and Wrath to the mouth of the Clyde,
There wasn't a child or a woman or man
Who could pipe with Clonglocketty Angus McClan.

No other could wake such destestable groans,
With reed and with chaunter[1] — with bag and with drones:[2]
All day and all night he delighted the chiels
With sniggering pibrochs[3] and jiggety reels.

He'd clamber a mountain and squat on the ground,
And the neighbouring maidens would gather around
To list to his pipes and to gaze in his een,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

[1] The shrill, tenor pipe in the bagpipe.

[2] The large tube of the bagpipe that gives the deep, droning sound.

[3] A wild, exciting music.

All loved their McClan, save a Sassenach [4] brute,
Who came to the Highlands to fish and to shoot;
He dressed himself up in a Highlander way;
Tho' his name it was Pattison Corby Torbay.

Torbay had incurred a good deal of expense
To make him a Scotchman in every sense;
But this is a matter, you'll readily own,
That isn't a question of tailors alone.

A Sassenach chief may be bonily built,
He may purchase a sporran,[5] a bonnet, and kilt;
Stick a skean [6] in his hose — wear an acre of stripes —
But he cannot assume an affection for pipes.

Clonglocketty's pipings all night and all day
Quite frenzied poor Pattison Corby Torbay;
The girls were amused at his singular spleen,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

"Macphairson Clonglocketty Angus, my lad,
With pibrochs and reels you are driving me mad.
If you really must play on that cursed affair,
My goodness! play something resembling an air."

Boiled over the blood of Macphairson McClan —
The Clan of Clonglocketty rose as one man;
For all were enraged at the insult, I ween —
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

"Let's show," said McClan, "to this Sassenach loon
That the bagpipes can play him a regular tune.
Let's see," said McClan, as he thoughtfully sat,
"'*In my Cottage*' is easy — I'll practise at that."

[4] A Saxon: an Englishman.
[5] The furry pouch worn by Highlanders in front of the kilt.
[6] A short sword.

He blew at his "Cottage," and blew with a will,
For a year, seven months, and a fortnight, until
(You'll hardly believe it!) McClan, I declare,
Elicited something resembling an air.

It was wild — it was fitful — as wild as the breeze —
It wandered about into several keys;
It was jerky, spasmodic, and harsh, I'm aware;
But still it distinctly suggested an air!

The Sassenach screamed, and the Sassenach danced,
He shrieked in his agony — bellowed and pranced
And the maidens who gathered rejoiced at the scene,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

"Hech gather, hech gather, hech gather around;
And fill a' ye lugs wi' the exquisite sound.
An air fra' the bagpipes — beat that if ye can:
Hurrah for Clonglocketty Angus McClan!"

The fame of his piping spread over the land:
Respectable widows proposed for his hand,
And maidens came flocking to sit on the green —
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

One morning the fidgetty Sassenach swore
He'd stand it no longer — he drew his claymore,[1]
And (this was, I think, extremely bad taste)
Divided Clonglocketty close to the waist.

Oh! loud were the wailings for Angus McClan,
Oh! deep was the grief for that excellent man —
The maids stood aghast at the horrible scene,
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

[1] A large, double-edged sword.

It sorrowed poor Pattison Corby Torbay
To find them "take on" in this serious way;
He pitied the poor little fluttering birds,
And solaced their souls with the following words: —

"Oh, maidens," said Pattison, touching his hat,
"Don't blubber, my dears, for a fellow like that;
Observe I'm a very superior man,
A much better fellow than Angus McClan."

They smiled when he winked and addressed them as "dears,"
And they all of them vowed, as they dried up their tears,
A pleasanter gentleman never was seen —
Especially Ellen McJones Aberdeen.

W. S. Gilbert

THE DARNED MOUNSEER

I shipped, d'ye see, in a Revenue sloop,
And, off Cape Finistere,
A merchantman we see,
A Frenchman, going free,
So we made for the bold Mounseer.
D'ye see?
We made for the bold Mounseer!
But she proved to be a Frigate — and she up with her ports,
And fires with a thirty-two!
It come uncommon near,
But we answered with a cheer,
Which paralysed the Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Which paralysed the Parley-voo!

Then our Captain he up and he says, says he,
"That chap we need not fear,—
We can take her, if we like,
She is sartin for to strike,
For she's only a darned Mounseer,
D'ye see?
She's only a darned Mounseer!
But to fight a French fal-lal! — it's like hittin' of a gal —
It's a lubberly thing for to do;
For we, with all our faults,
Why, we're sturdy British salts,
While she's but a Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
A miserable Parley-voo!"

So we up with our helm, and we scuds before the breeze,
As we gives a compassionating cheer;
Froggee answers with a shout
As he sees us go about,
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer,
D'ye see?
Which was grateful of the poor Mounseer!
And I'll wager in their joy they kissed each other's cheek
(Which is what them furriners do),
And they blessed their lucky stars
We were hardy British tars
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo,
D'ye see?
Who had pity on a poor Parley-voo!

W. S. Gilbert

THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS

The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair!
Bishop and abbot and prior were there;
Many a monk, and many a friar,
Many a knight, and many a squire,
With a great many more of lesser degree, —
In sooth a goodly company;
And they served the Lord Primate on bended knee.
Never, I ween, Was a prouder seen,
Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,
Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

In and out, through the motley rout,
That little Jackdaw kept hopping about;
Here and there Like a dog in a fair,
Over comfits and cakes, And dishes and plates,
Cowl and cope, and rochet and pall,
Mitre and crosier! he hopp'd upon all!
With a saucy air, He perch'd on the chair
Where, in state, the great Lord Cardinal sat
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat;
And he peer'd in the face Of his Lordship's Grace,
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,
'We two are the greatest folks here today!'
And the priests, with awe, As such freaks they saw,
Said, 'The Devil must be in that little Jackdaw!'
The feast was over, the board was clear'd,
The flawns and the custards had all disappear'd,
And six little Singing-boys, — dear little souls!
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,
Came, in order due, Two by two,
Marching that grand refectory through!

A nice little boy held a golden ewer,
Emboss'd and fill'd with water, as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur,
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.
Two nice little boys, rather more grown,
Carried lavender-water and eau de Cologne;
And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,
Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.
One little boy more A napkin bore,
Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,
And a Cardinal's Hat mark'd in permanent ink.

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight
Of these nice little boys dress'd all in white:
From his finger he draws His costly turquoise;
And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws,
Deposits it straight By the side of his plate,
While the nice little boys on his Eminence wait;
Till, when nobody's dreaming of any such thing,
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring.

* * * * * * * *

There's a cry and a shout, And a deuce of a rout
And nobody seems to know what they're about,
But the monks have their pockets all turn'd inside out;
The friars are kneeling, And hunting, and feeling
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.
The Cardinal drew Off each plum-colour'd shoe,
And left his red stockings exposed to the view;
He peeps, and he feels,
In the toes and the heels;
They turn up the dishes, they turn up the plates,

They take up the poker and poke out the grates,
— They turn up the rugs,
They examine the mugs: —
But, no! — no such thing; —
They can't find the ring!
And the Abbot declared that, 'when nobody twigg'd it,[1]
Some rascal or other had popp'd in, and prigg'd it!'[2]

The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He call'd for his candle, his bell, and his book!
In holy anger, and pious grief,
He solemnly cursed that rascally thief!
He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed;
From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head;
He cursed him in sleeping, that every night
He should dream of the devil, and wake in a fright;
He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking;
He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking;
He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;
He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying;
He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying! —
Never was heard such a terrible curse!
But what gave rise To no little surprise,
Nobody seemed one penny the worse!

The day was gone. The night came on,
The Monks and the Friars they search'd till dawn:
When the Sacristan saw, On crumpled claw,
Come limping a poor little lame Jackdaw;
No longer gay, As on yesterday;
His feathers all seem'd to be turn'd the wrong way; —
His pinions droop'd, he could hardly stand,

[1] Noticed it.
[2] Stolen it.

His head was as bald as the palm of your hand;
His eyes so dim, So wasted each limb,
That, heedless of grammar, they all cried, 'That's him! —
That's the scamp that has done this scandalous thing!
That's the thief that has got my Lord Cardinal's Ring!'
The poor little Jackdaw, When the monks he saw,
Feebly gave vent to the ghost of a caw;
And turn'd his bald head, as much as to say,
'Pray, be so good as to walk this way!'
Slower and slower, He limp'd on before,
Till they came to the back of the belfry door,
Where the first thing they saw, 'Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the ring in the nest of that little Jackdaw!

Then the great Lord Cardinal call'd for his book,
And off that terrible curse he took;
The mute expression Served in lieu of confession,
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,
The Jackdaw got plenary absolution!
When those words were heard, That poor little bird
Was so changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd.
He grew sleek, and fat; In addition to that,
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat!
His tail waggled more Even than before;
But no longer it wagg'd with an impudent air,
No longer he perch'd on the Cardinal's chair.
He hopp'd now about With a gait devout;
At Matins, at Vespers, he was never out;
And, so far from any more pilfering deeds,
He always seem'd telling the Confessor's beads.
If any one lied, — or if any one swore, —
Or slumber'd in prayer-time and happened to snore,

That good Jackdaw Would give a great 'Caw,'
As much as to say, 'Don't do so no more!'
While many remark'd as his manners they saw,
That they 'never had known such a pious Jackdaw!'
He long lived the pride Of that country side,
And at last in the odour of sanctity died;
When, as words were too faint, His merits to paint
The Conclave determined to make him a Saint!
And on newly-made Saints and Popes, as you know,
It's the custom at Rome, new names to bestow,
So they canonised him by the name of Jim Crow!

(From *The Ingoldsby Legends*)

Richard Harris Barham

THE CRUEL MOON

The cruel Moon hangs out of reach
Up above the shadowy beech.
Her face is stupid, but her eye
Is small and sharp and very sly.
Nurse says the Moon can drive you mad?
No, that's a silly story, lad!
Though she be angry, though she would
Destroy all England if she could
Yet think, what damage can she do
Hanging there so far from you?
Don't heed what frightened nurses say:
Moons hang much too far away.

Robert Graves

SONG AGAINST CHILDREN[1]

O the barberry bright, the barberry bright!
It stood on the mantelpiece because of the height.
Its stems were slender and thorny and tall
And it looked most beautiful against the grey wall.
But Michael climbed up there in spite of the height
And he ate all the berries off the barberry bright.

O the round holly wreath, the round holly wreath!
It hung in the window with ivy beneath.
It was plump and prosperous, spangled with red
And I thought it would cheer me although I were dead.
But Deborah climbed on a table beneath
And she ate all the berries off the round holly wreath.

O the mistletoe bough, the mistletoe bough!
Could anyone touch it? I did not see how.
I hung it up high that it might last long,
I wreathed it with ribbons and hailed it with song.
But Christopher reached it, I do not know how,
And he ate all the berries off the mistletoe bough.

Aline Kilmer

FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,
  And used to war's alarms;
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
  So he laid down his arms!

[1] From *Vigils* by Aline Kilmer. Copyright, 1921, George H. Doran Company, Publishers.

Now, as they bore him off the field,
Said he, "Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot!"

The army surgeons made him limbs:
Said he, "They're only pegs:
But there's as wooden members quite
As represent my legs!"

Now, Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray;
So he went to pay his devours,[1]
When he devoured his pay!

But when he called on Nelly Gray,
She made him quite a scoff;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
Began to take them off![2]

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!
Is this your love so warm?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
Should be more uniform!"

Said she, "I loved a soldier once,
For he was blithe and brave;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave!

"Before you had those timber toes,
Your love I did allow,
But then, you know, you stand upon
Another footing now!"

[1] Devotion.
[2] Slang for "make fun of them."

"O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call I left my legs
In Badajos's *breaches!*"

"Why, then," said she, "you've lost the feet
Of legs in war's alarms,
And now you can not wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms!"

"O false and fickle Nelly Gray!
I know why you refuse: —
Though I've no feet — some other man
Is standing in my shoes!

"I wish I ne'er had seen your face;
But now, a long farewell!
For you will be my death; — alas,
You will not be my *Nell!*"

Now, when he went from Nelly Gray,
His heart so heavy got
And life was such a burden grown,
It made him take a knot!

So round his melancholy neck
A rope he did entwine,
And, for his second time in life,
Enlisted in the Line!

One end he tied around a beam,
And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off — of course,
He soon was off his legs![1]

[1] Or "in hard luck."

And there he hung, till he was dead
As any nail in town, —
For, though distress had cut him up,
It could not cut him down!

A dozen men sat on his corpse,
To find out why he died —
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
With a *stake* in his inside!

Thomas Hood

THE MILK JUG

(*The Kitten Speaks*)

The Gentle Milk Jug blue and white
I love with all my soul
She pours herself with all her might
To fill my breakfast bowl.

All day she sits upon the shelf,
She does not jump or climb —
She only waits to pour herself
When 'tis my supper-time.

And when the Jug is empty quite,
I shall not mew in vain,
The Friendly Cow, all red and white,
Will fill her up again.

Oliver Herford

DE APPILE TREE

Dat's a mighty quare tale 'bout de Appile-tree
In de Pa'dise gyarden whar Adam run free,
Whar de butterflies drunk honey wid ol' Mammy Bee.
Talk 'bout good times! I bet you he had 'em —
Adam —
Ol' man Adam un' de Appile-tree.

He woke one mornin' wid a pullin' at his sleeve;
He open one eye, an' dar wuz Eve;
He shuck her han', wid "Honey, don't you grieve!"
Talk 'bout good times! I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve un' de Appile-tree.

Den Eve tuck a bite er de Appile fruit,
An' Adam he bit, an' den dey scoot
(Dar's whar de niggers l'arned de quick callyhoot),
An' run an' hid behime de fig-tree.
Talk about troubles! I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve behime de fig-tree.

Dey had der frolics an' dey had der flings,
An' den atter dat der fun tuck wings.
Honey mighty sweet, but bees got stings.
Talk about hard times! I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve behime de fig-tree.

Kaze out er dat gyarden dey had fer ter skin,
Fer ter look fer de crack whar Satan crope in.
Dey s'arch fur an wide, an' dey s'arch mighty well —

Eve she knowed, but she 'fuse fer ter tell.
Ol' Satan's trail wuz all rubbed out,
Ceppin' a track er two whar he walked about.
Talk about troubles! Well, I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve an' all der kin.

An' when dey got back, de gate wuz shot,
An' dat wuz de pay what Adam got.
In dat gyarden he went no mo';
De overseer gi' 'im a shovel an' a hoe,
A mule an' plow, an' a swingletree.[1]
Talk about hard times! I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
An' all er his chillun, bofe slave an' free;
Dey had 'em —
Bekaze er de fruit er de Appile-tree.

An' de chillun er Adam, an' de chillun's kin,
Dey all got smeared wid de pitch er Sin;
Dey shot der eyes ter de big hereatter,
An' flung Sin aroun' wid a tur'ble splatter,
An' collogued wid Satan, an' dat what de matter.
An' troubles — well, I bet you dey had 'em —
Adam —
De chillun er Adam dat fergit ter pray —
Dey had 'em —
An' dey keep on a-had'n 'em down ter dis day!

But dat wa'n't de last er de Appile-tree,
Kaze she scatter her seeds bofe fur an' free,
An' dat's what de matter wid you an' me.
I knows de feelin's what fotch on de Fall,

[1] Same as singletree or whiffletree; part of a horse's harness.

De red Appile an' ol' Satan's call —
Lor' bless yo' soul, I knows um all!
I'm kinder lopsided an' pidjin-toed,
But watch me keep in de middle er de road,
Kaze de troubles I got is a mighty big load.
Talk about troubles! I got um an' had um,
An' I know mighty well dat I cotch um fum Adam
An' de Appile-seeds what he scatter so free —
Adam —
Adam an' Eve an' de Appile-tree.

Joel Chandler Harris

LILLIPUT LEVEE

Where does Pinafore Palace stand?
Right in the middle of Lilliput-Land!
There the Queen eats bread-and-honey,
There the King counts up his money!

Oh, the Glorious Revolution!
Oh, the Provisional Constitution!
Now that the children, clever bold folks,
Have turned the tables upon the Old Folks!

Easily the thing was done,
For the children were more than two to one;
Brave as lions, quick as foxes,
With hoards of wealth in their money-boxes!

They seized the keys, they patrolled the street,
They drove the policeman off his beat,
They built barricades, they stationed sentries —
You must give the word, when you come to the entries!

They dressed themselves in the Riflemen's clothes,
They had pea-shooters, they had arrows and bows,
So as to put resistance down —
Order reigns in Lilliput-town!

They made the baker bake hot rolls;
They made the wharfinger send in coals,
They made the butcher kill the calf,
They cut the telegraph-wires in half.

They went to the chemist's, and with their feet
They kicked the physic all down the street;
They went to the school-room and tore the books,
They munched the puffs at the pastrycook's.

They sucked the jam, they lost the spoons,
They sent up several fire-balloons,
They let off crackers, they burnt a guy,
They piled a bonfire ever so high.

They offered a prize for the laziest boy,
And one for the most Magnificent toy;
They split or burnt the canes offhand,
They made new laws in Lilliput-land.

Never do to-day what you can
Put off till to-morrow, one of them ran;
Late to bed and late to rise
Was another law which they did devise.

They passed a law to have always plenty
Of beautiful things: we shall mention twenty:
A magic lantern for all to see,
Rabbits to keep, and a Christmas-tree,

A boat, a house that went on wheels,
An organ to grind, and sherry at meals,
Drums and wheelbarrows, Roman candles,
Whips with whistles let into the handles,

A real live giant, a roc to fly,
A goat to tease, a copper to shy,
A garret of apples, a box of paints,
A saw and a hammer, and no complaints.

Nail up the door, slide down the stairs,
Saw off the legs of the parlor chairs —
That was the way in Lilliput-land,
The children having the upper hand.

They made the Old Folks come to school,
And in pinafores, — that was the rule, —
Saying, *Eener-deener-diner-duss,*
Kattler-wheeler-whiler-wuss;

They made them learn all sorts of things
That nobody liked. They had catechisings;
They kept them in, they sent them down
In class, in school, in Lilliput-town.

O but they gave them tit-for-tat!
Thick bread-and-butter, and all that;
Stick-jaw pudding that tires your chin,
With the marmalade spread ever so thin!

They governed the clock in Lilliput-land,
They altered the hour or the minute-hand,
They made the day fast, they made the day slow,
Just as they wished the time to go.

They never waited for king or for cat;
They never wiped their shoes on the mat;
Their joy was great; their joy was greater;
They rode in the baby's perambulator!

There was a Levee in Lilliput-town,
At Pinafore Palace. Smith and Brown,
Jones and Robinson had to attend —
All to whom they cards did send.

Every one rode in a cab to the door;
Every one came in a pinafore;
Lady and gentleman, rat-tat-tat,
Loud knock, proud knock, opera hat!

The place was covered with silver and gold,
The place was as full as it ever could hold;
The ladies kissed her Majesty's hand,
Such was the custom in Lilliput-land.

His Majesty knighted eight or ten,
Perhaps a score, of the gentlemen,
Some of them short and some of them tall —
Arise, Sir What's-a-name What-do-you-call!

Conjuring tricks with the poker and tongs,
Riddles and forfeits, singing of songs;
One fat man, too fat by far,
Tried "Twinkle, twinkle, little star."

His voice was gruff, his pinafore tight,
His wife said, "Mind, dear, sing it right,"
But he forgot, and said Fa-la-la!
The Queen of Lilliput's own papa!

She frowned, and ordered him up to bed:
He said he was sorry; she shook her head;
His clean shirt-front with his tears was stained—
But discipline *had* to be maintained.

The Constitution! The Law! The Crown!
Order reigns in Lilliput-town!
The Queen is Jill, the King is John.
I trust the Government will get on.

William Brighty Rands

FABLES IN FOOLSCAP

THE ENCHANTED SHIRT

Fytte ye Firste: wherein it shall be shown how ye Truth is too mightie a Drugge for such as be of feeble temper.

The King was sick. His cheek was red
And his eye was clear and bright;
He ate and drank with a kingly zest,
And peacefully snored at night.

But he said he was sick, and a king should know,
And doctors came by the score.
They did not cure him. He cut off their heads
And sent to the schools for more.

At last two famous doctors came,
And one was as poor as a rat, —
He had passed his life in studious toil,
And never found time to grow fat.

The other had never looked in a book;
His patients gave him no trouble,
If they recovered they paid him well,
If they died their heirs paid double.

Together they looked at the royal tongue,
As the King on his couch reclined;
In succession they thumped his august chest,
But no trace of disease could find.

The old sage said, "You're as sound as a nut."
"Hang him up," roared the King in a gale,
In a ten-knot gale of royal rage;
The other leech grew a shade pale;

But he pensively rubbed his sagacious nose,
And thus his prescription ran,—
The King will be well, if he sleeps one night
In the Shirt of a Happy Man.

Fytte ye Seconde: telleth of ye search for ye Shirte and how it was nighe founde but was notte, for reasons which are sayd or sung.

Wide o'er the realm the couriers rode,
And fast their horses ran,
And many they saw, and to many they spoke,
But they found no Happy Man.

They found poor men who would fain be rich,
And rich who thought they were poor;
And men who twisted their waists in stays,
And women that short hose wore.

They saw two men by the roadside sit,
And both bemoaned their lot;
For one had buried his wife, he said,
And the other one had not.

At last as they came to a village gate,
A beggar lay whistling there;
He whistled and sang and laughed and rolled
On the grass in the soft June air.

The weary couriers paused and looked
At the scamp so blithe and gay;
And one of them said, "Heaven save you, friend!
You seem to be happy to-day."

"O yes, fair sirs," the rascal laughed
And his voice rang free and glad,
"An idle man has so much to do
That he never has time to be sad."

"This is our man," the courier said;
"Our luck has led us aright.
"I will give you a hundred ducats, friend,
For the loan of your shirt to-night."

The merry blackguard lay back on the grass,
And laughed till his face was black;
"I would do it, God wot," and he roared with the fun,
"But I haven't a shirt to my back."

Fytte ye Thirde: Shewing how Hys Majestie ye King came at last to sleepe in a Happie Man his Shirte.

Each day to the King the reports came in
Of his unsuccessful spies,
And the sad panorama of human woes
Passed daily under his eyes.

And he grew ashamed of his useless life,
And his maladies hatched in gloom;
He opened his windows and let the air
Of the free heaven into his room.

And out he went in the world and toiled
In his own appointed way;
And the people blessed him, the land was glad,
And the King was well and gay.

John Hay

THE CAP THAT FITS

SCENE. — *A Salon with blue and white Panels. Outside, persons pass and re-pass upon a terrace.*

HORTENSE. ARMANDE. MONSIEUR LOYAL.

HORTENSE (*behind her fan*)

Not young, I think.

ARMANDE (*raising her eye-glass*)

And faded, too: —

Quite faded! Monsieur, what say you?

M. LOYAL

Nay, I defer to you. In truth,
To me she seems all grace and youth.

HORTENSE

Graceful? You think it? What, with hands
That hang like this (*with a gesture*).

ARMANDE

And how she stands!

M. LOYAL

Nay, I am wrong again. I thought
Her air delightfully untaught!

HORTENSE

But you amuse me —

M. LOYAL

Still her dress, —
Her dress at least, you *must* confess —

ARMANDE

Is odious simply! Jacotot
Did not supply that lace, I know;
And where, I ask, has mortal seen
A hat unfeathered!

Legros

HORTENSE

Edged with green!

M. LOYAL

The words remind me. Let me say
A Fable that I heard to-day.
Have I permission?

BOTH (*with enthusiasm*)

Monsieur, pray.

M. LOYAL

Myrtilla (lest a Scandal rise,
The Lady's Name I thus disguise),
Dying of Ennui, once decided,—
Much on Resource herself she prided,—
To choose a Hat. Forthwith she flies
On that momentous Enterprise.
Whether to Petit or Legros,
I know not: only this I know;—
Head-dresses then, of any Fashion,
Bore Names of Quality or Passion.
Myrtilla tried them, almost all;
"Prudence," she felt, was somewhat small;
"Retirement" seemed the Eyes to hide;
"Content," at once, she cast aside.
"Simplicity,"—'twas out of place;
"Devotion,"—for an older face:
Briefly, Selection smaller grew,
"Vexatious! odious!"—none would do!
Then, on a sudden, she espied
One that she thought she had not tried;
Becoming, rather,—"edged with green,"—
Roses in yellow, Thorns between.
"Quick! Bring me that!" 'Tis brought. "Complete,
*Divine, Enchanting, Tasteful, Neat,"

In all the Tones. "*And this you call — ?*"
"'ILL-NATURE,' Madame. It fits all."

HORTENSE

A thousand thanks! So naïvely turned!

ARMANDE

So useful too, — to those concerned!
'Tis yours?

M. LOYAL

Ah no, — some cynic wit's;
And called (I think) —
(*Placing his hat upon his breast.*)
"The Cap that Fits."

Austin Dobson

THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT

(*A Hindoo Fable*)

It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"

The *Second,* feeling of the tusk,
Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"

The *Third* approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"

The *Fourth* reached out an eager hand,
And felt about the knee.
"What most this wondrous beast is like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The *Fifth* who chanced to touch the ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
  Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
  Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
  And all were in the wrong!

Moral

So oft in theologic wars,
  The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
  Of what the others mean,
And prate about an Elephant
  Not one of them has seen!

John Godfrey Saxe

THE VAINGLORIOUS OAK AND THE MODEST BULRUSH[1]

A bulrush stood on a river's rim,
  And an oak that grew near by
Looked down with cold hauteur on him,
  And addressed him this way: "Hi!"
The rush was a proud patrician, and
  He retorted, "Don't you know,
What the veriest boor should understand,
  That 'Hi' is low?"

This cutting rebuke the oak ignored.
  He returned, "My slender friend,

[1] From *Fables for the Frivolous* by Guy Wetmore Carryl. Copyright, 1898, by Harper & Brothers.

I will frankly state that I'm somewhat bored
With the way you bow and bend."
"But you quite forget," the rush replied,
"It's an art these bows to do,
An art I wouldn't attempt if I'd
Such boughs as you."

"Of course," said the oak, "in my sapling days
My habit it was to bow,
But the wildest storm that the winds could raise
Would never disturb me now.
I challenge the breeze to make me bend,
And the blast to make me sway."
The shrewd little bulrush answered, "Friend,
Don't get so gay."

And the words had barely left his mouth
When he saw the oak turn pale,
For, racing along south-east-by-south,
Came ripping a raging gale.
And the rush bent low as the storm went past,
But stiffly stood the oak,
Though not for long, for he found the blast
No idle joke.

* * * * * * * *

Imagine the lightning's gleaming bars,
Imagine the thunder's roar,
For that is exactly what eight stars
Are set in a row here for!
The oak lay prone when the storm was done,
While the rush, still quite erect,
Remarked aside, "What under the sun
Could one expect?"

And *The Moral,* I'd have you understand,
Would have made La Fontaine blush,
For it's this: Some storms come early, and
Avoid the rush!

Guy Wetmore Carryl

THE EMBARRASSING EPISODE OF LITTLE MISS MUFFET [1]

Little Miss Muffet discovered a tuffet,
(Which never occurred to the rest of us)
And, as 'twas a June day, and just about noonday,
She wanted to eat — like the best of us:
Her diet was whey, and I hasten to say
It is wholesome and people grow fat on it.
The spot being lonely, the lady not only
Discovered the tuffet, but sat on it.

A rivulet gabbled beside her and babbled,
As rivulets always are thought to do,
And dragon-flies sported around and cavorted,
As poets say dragon-flies ought to do;
When, glancing aside for a moment, she spied
A horrible sight that brought fear to her,
A hideous spider was sitting beside her,
And most unavoidably near to her!

Albeit unsightly, this creature politely
Said: "Madam, I earnestly vow to you,
I'm penitent that I did not bring my hat. I
Should otherwise certainly bow to you."

[1] From *Mother Goose for Grown-Ups* by Guy Wetmore Carryl. Copyright, 1900, Harper & Brothers.

Though anxious to please, he was so ill at ease
That he lost all his sense of propriety,
And grew so inept that he clumsily stept
In her plate — which is barred in Society.

This curious error completed her terror;
She shuddered, and growing much paler, not
Only left tuffet, but dealt him a buffet
Which doubled him up in a sailor-knot.
It should be explained that at this he was pained:
He cried: "I have vexed you, no doubt of it!
Your fist's like a truncheon." "You're still in my luncheon,"
Was all that she answered. "Get out of it!"

And *The Moral* is this: Be it madam or miss
To whom you have something to say,
You are only absurd when you get in the curd
But you're rude when you get in the whey!

Guy Wetmore Carryl

HENRY KING

The Chief Defect of Henry King
Was chewing little bits of String.
At last he swallowed some which tied
Itself in ugly Knots inside.

Physicians of the Utmost Fame
Were called at once; but when they came
They answered, as they took their Fees,
"There is no Cure for this Disease.

Henry will very soon be dead."
His Parents stood about his Bed
Lamenting his Untimely Death,
When Henry, with his Latest Breath,

Cried, "Oh, my Friends, be warned by me,
That Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch, and Tea
Are all the Human Frame requires . . ."
With that, the Wretched Child expires.

Hilaire Belloc

LEETLA GIORGIO WASHEENTON

You know w'at for ees school keep out
  Dees holiday, my son?
Wal, den, I gona tal you 'bout
  Dees Giorgio Washeenton.

Wal, Giorgio was leetla keed
  Ees leeve long time ago,
An' he gon' school for learn to read
  An' write hees nam', you know.
He moocha like for gona school
  An' learna hard all day,
Baycause he no gat time for fool
  Weeth bada keeds an' play.
Wal, wan cold day w'en Giorgio
  Ees steel so vera small,
He start from home, but he ees no
  Show up een school at all!
O! my! hees Pop ees gatta mad
  An' so he tal hees wife:

"Som' leetla boy ees gon' feel bad
To-day, you bat my life!"
An' den he grab a beega steeck
An' gon' out een da snow
An' lookin' all aroun' for seek
Da leetla Giorgio.
Ha! w'at you theenk? Firs' theeng he see
Where leetla boy he stan',
All tangla up een cherry tree,
Weeth hatchet een hees han'.
"Ha! w'at you do?" hees Pop he say,
"W'at for you busta rule
An' stay away like dees for play
Eenstead for gon' to school?"
Da boy ees say: "I no can lie,
An' so I speaka true.
I stay away from school for try
An' gat som' wood for you.
I theenka deesa cherry tree
Ees gooda size for chop,
An' so I cut heem down, you see,
For justa help my Pop."
Hees Pop he no can gatta mad,
But looka please' an say:
"My leetla boy, I am so glad
You taka holiday."

Ees good for leetla boy, you see,
For be so bright an' try
For help hees Pop; so den he be
A granda man bimeby.
So now you gatta holiday
An' eet ees good, you know,

For you gon' do da sama way
  Like leetla Giorgio.
Don't play so mooch, but justa stop,
  Eef you want be som' good,
An' justa help your poor old Pop
  By carry home some wood;
An' mebbe so like Giorgio
  You grow for be so great
You gona be da Presidant
  Of dese Unita State'.

T. A. Daly

HOW BRER TARRYPIN LEARNED TO FLY

Brer Tarrypin tired er prom'nadin' roun',
An' he lay in de sun right flat on de groun';
His foots wuz col', an' his eyes wuz red,
An' it look like sump'in done bunged up his head;
But he watch Brer Buzzard a-sailin' in de sky,
An' he wisht fum his heart dat he could fly —
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

He frown an' he grunt, he grunt an' he groan,
He sniffle an' snuffle, he wheeze an' he moan;
He drapt a big tear in de acorn-cup,
An' de bug run out, he gobble 'im up;
Brer Buzzard flew'd, an' he flew'd mighty high,
He flop his wings an' he wink his eye —
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

He see Brer Tarrypin layin' flat,
An' he chuckle ter hisse'f, " Oh-ho! look at dat!
It's a mighty funny place fer ter make a bed,
An' he may be sick, an' he may be dead! "

So he drap down slow, an' he drap down sly,
But Tarrypin watchin' wid his red eye —.
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Buzzard he lit a little up de slope,
An' hit de gait call de buzzard-lope,
An' den Brer Tarrypin tuck in his head
An' lay des like he done gone ter bed.
Brer Buzzard he holler, "He! he-hi!"
An' Tarrypin 'spon', "Ah-yi! ah-yi!"
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

"You keep yo-se'f shot up in yo' shell,"
Brer Buzzard 'low, "but I hope you er well?"
Brer Tarrypin say he feelin' ez smart
Ez what a man kin wid a swelled-up heart,
An' a liver all blue, an' a blood-red eye;
An' he moaned an' groaned, an' he cried, "Oh, my!"
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

"Better git de doctor!" Brer Buzzard say;
"He'll kyo you, sho, ef dey's any way."
"I done been saw 'im," Brer Tarrypin 'low,
"An' he up an' tol' me dat my onliest how
Is to fin' somebody dat'll tote me high
An' turn me loose so I'll l'arn how ter fly" —
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Brer Buzzard he say, "Why, bless you, chile!
You kin count on me!" an' he smole a smile.
"When it comes ter heft you er right smart chunk,
But I speck I kin tote you" — an' den he wunk.
"I'll tote you low, an' I'll tote you high;
I'll tote you past, an' I'll tote you by" —
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

He ruffle his fedders, an he flop his wings,
Wid "Dis is de trouble dat frien'ship brings;
But I'll take it all an' ax fer mo',
Ef so be I kin git you ter go."
Brer Tarrypin study, an' look at de sky,
Kaze his heart wuz sot on l'arnin' ter fly —
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Down on his hunkers Brer Buzzard squot,
An' on his back Brer Tarrypin got;
'Twuz slip an' fall, but he got on,
An' de nex' news you know dey bofe wuz gone!
A-sailin' low, an' a-sailin' high,
A-sailin' fur, an' a-sailin' nigh —
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

"Now, how shill I l'arn?" Brer Tarrypin say.
Brer Buzard 'spon', "I'll show you de way.
I'm a-flyin' high, but I'll start down,
Den you turn loose an' sail all roun'."
Brer Tarrypin say — an' he shot his eye —
"Ef we go much higher we'll sturb de sky!"
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Tarrypin turn loose an' down he come,
Wid a *blip* an' a *blap* an' a *blim-blam-blum!*
He come wid a squeal, he come wid a squall —
Dey ain't nobody y'ever had sech a fall!
An' a mighty good reason: he wuz up so high
Dat when he hit de groun' he wuz dead, mighty nigh —
Fil-a-ma-looner leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Buzzard he foller fer ter see it done well,
Wid "La, ol' friend'! it seem like you fell!
An' all you hatter do wuz ter flop yo' wings!"

Tarrypin groan; he say, "By jings!
I know one thing, an' dat ain't two —
I know one thing wid my fil-a-ma-loo!
I know one thing, an' I know it right —
I know how ter fly, but I dunner how ter light!
Sump'n n'er tol' me ez I sail in de sky,
'L'arn how ter light 'fo' you l'arn how ter fly!'"
Fil-a-ma-looner-leener! fil-a-ma-leener-li!

Joel Chandler Harris

FABLE

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter "Little Prig;"
Bun replied,
"You are doubtless very big;
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together,
To make up a year
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I'm not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry.
I'll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track.
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

IDEALISTS

Brother Tree:
Why do you reach and reach?
do you dream some day to touch the sky?
Brother Stream:
Why do you run and run?
do you dream some day to fill the sea?
Brother Bird:
Why do you sing and sing?
do you dream —

Young Man:
Why do you talk and talk?

Alfred Kreymborg

THE TREE

I am four monkeys.
One hangs from a limb,
tail-wise,
chattering at the earth;
another is cramming his belly with cocoanut;
the third is up in the top branches,
quizzing the sky;
and the fourth —
he's chasing another monkey.

How many monkeys are you?

Alfred Kreymborg

VOICES

O, there were lights and laughter
  And motions to and fro
Of people as they enter
  And people as they go. . . .

And there were many voices
  Vying at the feast,
But mostly I remember
  Yours — who spoke the least.

Witter Bynner

RHYME WITHOUT REASON

TOPSY-TURVY WORLD

If the butterfly courted the bee,
And the owl the porcupine;
If churches were built in the sea,
And three times one was nine;
If the pony rode his master,
If the buttercups ate the cows,
If the cats had the dire disaster
To be worried, sir, by the mouse;
If Mamma, sir, sold the baby
To a gypsy for half a crown;
If a gentleman, sir, was a lady, —
The world would be Upside-down!
If any or all of these wonders
Should ever come about,
I should not consider them blunders,
For I should be Inside-out:

Chorus

Ba-ba, black wool
Have you any sheep?
Yes, sir, a packfull,
Creep, mouse, creep!
Four-and-twenty little maids
Hanging out the pie,
Out jumped the honey-pot,
Guy Fawkes, Guy!
Cross latch, cross latch,
Sit and spin the fire;
When the pie was opened,
The bird was on the brier!

William Brighty Rands

BALLAD

Part I

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her apron'd knees.

The piper he piped on the hill-top high,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
Till the cow said "I die," and the goose ask'd why?
And the dog said nothing, but search'd for fleas.

The farmer he strode through the square farmyard:
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
His last brew of ale was a trifle hard—
The connexion of which with the plot one sees.

The farmer's daughter had frank blue eyes;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,
As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.

The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
If you try to approach her, away she skips
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.

The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.

PART II

She sat, with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks
There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
She gave up mending her father's breeks,
And let the cat roll in her new chemise.

She sat, with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;
Then she follow'd him out o'er the misty leas.

Her sheep follow'd her, as their tails did them.
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And this song is consider'd a perfect gem,
And as to the meaning, it's what you please.

C. S. Calverley

THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!
How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
But what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away for a year and a day,
To the land where the Bong-tree grows,
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

'Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

Edward Lear

LITTLE BILLEE

There were three sailors of Bristol city
Who took a boat and went to sea.
But first with beef and captain's biscuits
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Billee.
Now when they got as far as the Equator
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."
To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,
"We've nothing left, us must eat we."

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"With one another we shouldn't agree!
There's little Bill, he's young and tender,
We're old and tough, so let's eat he.

"Oh, Billy, we're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the button of your chemie."
When Bill received this information
He used his pocket-handkerchie.

"First let me say my catechism,
Which my poor mammy taught to me."
"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jimmy
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-topgallant mast,
And down he fell on his bended knee.
He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment
When up he jumps. "There's land I see:

"Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee:
There's the British flag a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K. C. B."

So when they got aboard the Admiral's
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee;
But as for little Bill he made him
The captain of a Seventy-three!

William Makepeace Thackeray

THE SNARK

(*From "The Hunting of the Snark"*)

"Come, listen, my men, while I tell you again
The five unmistakable marks
By which you may know, wheresoever you go,
The warranted genuine Snarks.

"Let us take them in order. The first is the taste,
Which is meagre and hollow, but crisp:
Like a coat that is rather too tight in the waist,
With a flavour of Will-o-the-wisp.

"Its habit of getting up late you'll agree
That it carries too far, when I say
That it frequently breakfasts at five-o'clock tea,
And dines on the following day.

"The third is its slowness in taking a jest.
Should you happen to venture on one,
It will sigh like a thing that is deeply distressed:
And it always looks grave at a pun.

"The fourth is its fondness for bathing-machines,
Which it constantly carries about,
And believes that they add to the beauty of scenes —
A sentiment open to doubt.

"The fifth is ambition. It next will be right
To describe each particular batch:
Distinguishing those that have feathers, and bite,
From those that have whiskers, and scratch.

" For, although common Snarks do no manner of harm,
Yet I feel it my duty to say
Some are Boojums — " The Bellman broke off in alarm,
For the Baker had fainted away.

Lewis Carroll

THE BAKER'S TALE

(*From " The Hunting of the Snark "*)

They roused him with muffins — they roused him with ice —
They roused him with mustard and cress —
They roused him with jam and judicious advice —
They set him conundrums to guess.

When at length he sat up and was able to speak,
His sad story he offered to tell;
And the Bellman cried " Silence! Not even a shriek! "
And excitedly tingled his bell.

There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream,
Scarcely even a howl or a groan,
As the man they called " Ho! " told his story of woe
In an antediluvian tone.

" My father and mother were honest, though poor — "
" Skip all that! " cried the Bellman in haste.
" If it once becomes dark, there's no chance of a Snark —
We have hardly a minute to waste! "

" I skip forty years," said the Baker, in tears,
" And proceed without further remark
To the day when you took me aboard of your ship
To help you in hunting the Snark.

"A dear uncle of mine (after whom I was named)
Remarked, when I bade him farewell—"
"Oh, skip your dear uncle," the Bellman exclaimed,
As he angrily tingled his bell.

"He remarked to me then," said that mildest of men,
"'If your Snark be a Snark that is right:
Fetch it home by all means—you may serve it with greens
And it's handy for striking a light.

"'You may seek it with thimbles—and seek it with care;
You may hunt it with forks and hope;
You may threaten its life with a railway-share;
You may charm it with smiles and soap—'"

("That's exactly the method," the Bellman bold
In a hasty parenthesis cried,
"That's exactly the way I have always been told
That the capture of Snarks should be tried!")

"'But oh, beamish nephew, beware of the day,
If your Snark be a Boojum! For then
You will softly and suddenly vanish away,
And never be met with again!'

"It is this, it is this that oppresses my soul,
When I think of my uncle's last words;
And my heart is like nothing so much as a bowl
Brimming over with quivering curds!

"It is this, it is this—" "We have had that before!"
The Bellman indignantly said.
And the Baker replied "Let me say it once more.
It is this, it is this, that I dread!

" I engage with the Snark — every night after dark —
In a dreamy delirious fight:
I serve it with greens in those shadowy scenes,
And I use it for striking a light:

" But if ever I meet with a Boojum, that day,
In a moment (of this I am sure),
I shall softly and suddenly vanish away —
And the notion I cannot endure! "

Lewis Carroll

HOW TO TELL THE WILD ANIMALS

If ever you should go by chance
To jungles in the East;
And if there should to you advance
A large and tawny beast,
If he roars at you as you're dyin'
You'll know it is the Asian Lion.

Or if some time when roaming round,
A noble wild beast greets you,
With black stripes on a yellow ground,
Just notice if he eats you.
This simple rule may help you learn
The Bengal Tiger to discern.

If strolling forth, a beast you view,
Whose hide with spots is peppered,
As soon as has lept on you,
You'll know it is the leopard.
'Twill do no good to roar with pain,
He'll only lep and lep again.

If when you're walking round your yard,
  You meet a creature there,
Who hugs you very, very hard,
  Be sure it is the Bear.
If you have any doubt, I guess
He'll give you just one more caress.

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
  A novice might nonplus,
The Crocodiles you always may
  Tell from Hyenas thus:
Hyenas come with merry smiles;
But if they weep, they're Crocodiles.

The true Chameleon is small,
  A lizard sort of thing;
He hasn't any ears at all,
  And not a single wing.
If there is nothing on the tree,
'Tis the Chameleon you see.

Carolyn Wells

THE YAK

As a friend to the children commend me the Yak.
  You will find it exactly the thing:
It will carry and fetch, you can ride on its back,
  Or lead it about with a string.

The Tartar who dwells on the plains of Thibet
  (A desolate region of snow)
Has for centuries made it a nursery pet,
  And surely the Tartar should know!

Then tell your papa where the Yak can be got,
And if he is awfully rich
He will buy you the creature — or else he will not.
(I cannot be positive which.)

Hilaire Belloc

THE FROG

Be kind and tender to the Frog,
And do not call him names,
As 'Slimy skin,' or 'Polly-wog,'
Or likewise 'Ugly James,'

Or 'Gape-a-grin,' or 'Toad-gone-wrong,'
Or 'Billy Bandy-knees':
The Frog is justly sensitive
To epithets like these.

No animal will more repay
A treatment kind and fair;
At least so lonely people say
Who keep a Frog (and, by the way,
They are extremely rare).

Hilaire Belloc

THE LION

The Lion, the Lion, he dwells in the waste,
He has a big head and a very small waist;
But his shoulders are stark, and his jaws they are grim,
And a good little child will not play with him.

Hilaire Belloc

THE GLAD YOUNG CHAMOIS

How lightly leaps the youthful chamois [1]
From rock to rock and never misses!
I always get all cold and clamois
When near the edge of precipisses.

Confronted by some yawning chasm,
He bleats not for his sire or mamois
(That is, supposing that he has'm)
But yawns himself — the bold young lamois!

He is a thing of beauty always;
And when he dies, a gray old ramois,
Leaves us his horns to deck our hallways;
His skin cleans teaspoons, soiled or jamois.

I shouldn't like to be a chamois,
However much I am his debtor.
I hate to run and jump; why, damois,
'Most any job would suit me bebtor!

Burges Johnson

WORDS

Now, speech is very curious:
You never know what minute
A word will show a brand-new side,
With brand-new meaning in it.
This world could hardly turn around,
If some things acted like they sound.

[1] Of course you know that, no matter how it is spelled, *chamois* is pronounced *shammy*.

Suppose the April flower-beds,
Down in the garden spaces,
Were made with green frog-blanket spreads
And caterpillar-cases;
Or oak trees locked their trunks to hide
The countless rings they keep inside!

Suppose from every pitcher-plant
The milk-weed came a-pouring;
That tiger-lilies could be heard
With dandelions roaring,
Till all the cat-tails, far and near,
Began to bristle up in fear!

What if the old cow blew her horn
Some peaceful evening hour,
And suddenly a blast replied
From every trumpet-flower,
While people's ears beat noisy drums
To "Hail, the Conquering Hero Comes!"

If barn-yard fowls had honey-combs,
What should we think, I wonder?
If lightning-bugs should swiftly strike,
Then peal with awful thunder?
And would it turn our pink cheeks pale
To see a comet switch its tail?

Nancy Byrd Turner

CONTRARY MARY

You ask why Mary was called contrary?
Well, this is why, my dear:
She planted the most outlandish things

In her garden every year;
She was always sowing the queerest seed,
And when advised to stop,
Her answer was merely, "No, indeed —
Just wait till you see my crop!"

And here are some of the crops, my child
(Although not nearly all):
Bananarcissus and cucumberries,
And violettuce small;
Potatomatoes, melonions rare,
And rhubarberries round,
With porcupineapples prickly-rough
On a little bush close to the ground.

She gathered the stuff in mid-July
And sent it away to sell —
And now you'll see how she earned her name,
And how she earned it well.
Were the crops hauled off in a farmer's cart?
No, not by any means,
But in little June-buggies and automobeetles
And dragonflying-machines!

Nancy Byrd Turner

A MEDLEY

Little Jack Horner sat in the corner
  Eying the pies all day,
While little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet
  Eating her curds and whey.

Old Mother Hubbard then went to the cupboard
To give him a pie and bun,
When out walked a spider and sat down beside her —
So *this* little pig had none!

Michael Lewis

COMPANIONS

I know not of what we ponder'd
Or made pretty pretence to talk,
As, her hand within mine, we wander'd
Toward the pool by the limetree walk,
While the dew fell in showers from the passion-flowers
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

I can not recall her figure:
Was it regal as Juno's own?
Or only a trifle bigger
Then the elves who surround the throne
Of the Faëry Queen, and are seen, I ween,
By mortals in dreams alone?

What her eyes were like, I know not:
Perhaps they were blurr'd with tears;
And perhaps in your skies there glow not
(On the contrary) clearer spheres.
No! as to her eyes I am just as wise
As you or the cat, my dears.

Her teeth, I presume, were "pearly":
But which was she, brunette or blonde?
Her hair, was it quaintly curly,
Or as straight as a beadle's wand?
That I fail'd to remark; — it was rather dark
And shadowy round the pond.

Then the hand that reposed so snugly
In mine — was it plump or spare?
Was the countenance fair or ugly?
Nay, children, you have me there!
My eyes were p'raps blurred; and besides I'd heard
That it's horribly rude to stare.

And I — was I brusque and surly?
Or oppressively bland and fond?
Was I partial to rising early?
Or why did we twain abscond,
All breakfastless too, from the public view
To prowl by a misty pond?

What pass'd, what was felt or spoken —
Whether anything pass'd at all —
And whether the heart was broken,
That beat under that shelt'ring shawl —
(If shawl she had on, which I doubt) — has gone,
Yes, gone from me past recall.

Was I haply the lady's suitor?
Or her uncle? I can't make out —
Ask your governess, dears, or tutor.
For myself, I'm in hopeless doubt
As to why we were there, who on earth we were,
And what this is all about.

C. S. Calverley

NONSENSE RHYMES

I

On DIGITAL EXTREMITIES:
A Poem, and a Gem It Is!

I'd Rather have Fingers than Toes;
I'd Rather have Ears than a Nose;
And As for my Hair,
I'm Glad it's All There;
I'll be Awfully Sad, when it Goes!

II

THE FLOORLESS ROOM: A Novel Sort Of Argument Without Support.

I Wish that my Room had a Floor!
I don't so Much Care for a Door,
But this Crawling Around
Without Touching the Ground
Is getting to be Quite a Bore!

III

THE SUNSET: Picturing the Glow It Casts upon a Dish of Dough.

The Sun is Low, to Say the Least,
Although it is Well-Red;
Yet, Since it Rises in the Yeast,
It Should be Better Bred!

IV

THE WINDOW PAIN: a Theme Symbolic, Pertaining to the Melon Colic.

The Window has Four Little Panes;
But One have I —
The Window Pains are in its Sash;
I Wonder Why!

V

THE PURPLE COW'S Projected Feast: Reflections on a Mythic Beast, Who's quite Remarkable, at Least.

I never saw a Purple Cow,
I never hope to see one;
But I can tell you, anyhow,
I'd rather see than be one!

Gelett Burgess

NONSENSE LIMERICKS

There was an Old Man in a tree
Who was horribly bored by a Bee;
When they said, "Does it buzz?"
He replied, "Yes, it does!
It's a regular brute of a Bee."

*

There was a Young Lady of Norway,
Who casually sat in a Doorway;
When the door squeezed her flat,
She exclaimed, "What of that?"
This courageous Young Lady of Norway.

There was an Old Man who said, "How
Shall I flee from this horrible Cow?
I will sit on this stile,
And continue to smile,
Which may soften the heart of that Cow."

*

There was an Old Man of Cape Horn,
Who wished he had never been born;
So he sat on a Chair
Till he died of despair,
That dolorous Man of Cape Horn.

*

There was a Young Lady whose eyes
Were unique as to color and size;
When she opened them wide,
People all turned aside,
And started away in surprise.

*

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared! —
Two Owls and a Hen,
Four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard!"

Edward Lear

THREE FAMOUS LIMERICKS

I

There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside,
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

II

The poor benighted Hindoo,
He does the best he kinddo;
  He sticks to caste
  From first to last;
For pants he makes his skindo.

III

A lady there was of Antigua,
Who said to her spouse, "What a pig you are!"
  He answered, "My queen,
  Is it manners you mean,
Or do you refer to my figuah?"

Cosmo Monkhouse

FOUR TRICKY LIMERICKS

I

A tutor who tooted the flute
Tried to tutor two tooters to toot.
  Said the two to the tutor,
  "Is it harder to toot or
To tutor two tooters to toot?"

II

A canner, exceedingly canny,
One morning remarked to his granny,
  "A canner can can
  Anything that he can,
But a canner can't can a can, can he?"

III

There was a young fellow named Tait,
Who dined with his girl at 8.08;
But I'd hate to relate
What that fellow named Tait
And his tête-a-tête ate at 8.08.

IV

Said a bad little youngster named Beauchamp: *
"Those jelly-tarts, how shall I reauchamp?
To my parents I'd go,
But they always say 'No,'
No matter how much I beseauchamp."

Carolyn Wells

* (Pronounced "Beecham"!)

CROONS AND LULLABIES

WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, and NOD

Wynken, Blynken, and Nod one night
  Sailed off in a wooden shoe —
Sailed on a river of crystal light,
  Into a sea of dew.
'Where are you going, and what do you wish?'
  The old moon asked the three.
'We have come to fish for the herring-fish
  That live in this beautiful sea;
Nets of silver and gold have we!'
Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
  As they rocked in the wooden shoe,
And the wind that sped them all night long,
  Ruffled the waves of dew.
The little stars were the herring-fish
  That lived in that beautiful sea —
'Now cast your nets wherever you wish —
  But never afeared are we';
So cried the stars to the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
  For the fish in the twinkling foam —
Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe,
  Bringing the fishermen home;
'Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
  As if it could not be;
And some folks thought 'twas a dream they'd dreamed
  Of sailing that beautiful sea —
But I shall name you the fishermen three:
    Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one's trundle-bed.
So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock in the misty sea,
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three:
Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Eugene Field

LULLABY

Bedtime's come fu' little boys.
Po' little lamb.
Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.
You gwine t' b'have to-morrer sho' ?
Yes, you tole me dat befo',
Don't you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
Po' little lamb.
Th'owin' stones an' runnin' 'way,
Po' little lamb.
My, but you's a-runnin' wil',
Look jes' lak some po' folks chile;
Mam' gwine whup you atter while,
Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed to def,
Po' little lamb.
Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
Po' little lamb.
See dem han's now — sich a sight!
Would you evah b'lieve dey's white?
Stan' still twell I wash 'em right,
Po' little lamb.

Jes' cain't hol' yo' haid up straight,
Po' little lamb.
Hadn't oughter played so late,
Po' little lamb.
Mammy don' know whut she'd do,
Ef de chillun's all lak you;
You's a caution now fu' true,
Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
Po' little lamb.
Y'ought to have a right good slap,
Po' little lamb.
You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don't you peep.
Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
Po' little lamb.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar

SWEET AND LOW

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,

Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the western sea!
  Over the rolling waters go,
  Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
  Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Alfred Tennyson

A CRADLE SONG

The angels are stooping
  Above your bed;
They weary of trooping
  With the whimpering dead.

God's laughing in heaven
  To see you so good;
The Shining Seven
  Are gay with His mood.

I kiss you and kiss you,
  My pigeon, my own;
Ah, how I shall miss you
  When you have grown.

William Butler Yeats

SLEEP

While sways the restless sea
  Beyond the shore,
And the waves sing listlessly
  Their secret lore,
And the soft fragrant air
  From off the deep
Scarce stirs thine outspread hair,—
  Sleep!

Far up in purple skies
  Great lamps hang out,
White flames that fall and rise
  In motley rout;
While fall their silver rays
  O'er crag and steep,
Woodlands and meadow-ways,—
    Sleep!

While the moon's amber gleams
  Gild rock and flower,
Let no untimely dreams
  Possess the hour:
Let no vague fears the heart
  'Mid slumber keep,
In dreams love hath no smart,—
  Sleep!

William Sharp

TWO TAVERNS

I remember how I lay
On a bank a summer day,
Peering into weed and flower:
Watched a poppy all one hour;
Watched it till the air grew chill
In the darkness of the hill;
Till I saw a wild bee dart
Out of the cold to the poppy's heart;
Saw the petals gently spin,
And shut the little lodger in.

Then I took the quiet road
To my own secure abode.
All night long his tavern hung;
Now it rested, now it swung;
I asleep in steadfast tower,
He asleep in stirring flower;
In our hearts the same delight
In the hushes of the night;
Over us both the same dear care
As we slumbered unaware.

Edwin Markham

OLD NURSE WINTER

In Autumn tomboy winds begin to throw
The dust and scattered leaves into Earth's eyes,
And Old Nurse Winter hurries from the skies
In answer to her darling's cry of woe.
Kind Father Night bends low to still her weeping
And calls the friendly stars to guard her sleeping.

Old Nurse Winter, bless her wrinkled heart,
Comes shaking out her coverlets of snow,
She'll tuck the baby Earth in warm, I know,
And tell her little pattering tales to start
A dream of silver moss and snow-drops peeping;
And sing her windy songs to soothe her sleeping.

Jean Starr Untermeyer

THE SHIP O' BED

When I was young, I had a bed
  That was no bed at all,
But a good great ship with seven masts
  And seamen brown and tall.

Each seaman had a lantern white
  To light us past the bars,
And all of them knew old sea-songs,
  And their eyes were like the stars.

The stars rolled millions overhead,
  But seven were made fast,
The brightest and the best of all,
  Upon each mighty mast.

Four Captains had my starry bed,
  I named them in my prayer,
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
  With golden beards and hair.

But the Pilot, whom I loved the best
  Because he called me *Sir*
And played the games I liked to play,
  Was good Saint Christopher.

Out we broke our sails which seemed
  Like patches that the moon
Makes upon a quiet floor
  When crickets sing their tune.

And we were off to seek a Dame
  Who would be kind to me
And turn each sailor's heart to gold,
  The Lady of the Sea!

I think she lived beyond the place
  Where fish grow crowns of gold
And where there are so many tales
  That all are never told.

The wind blew very wonderful,
  Throwing foam like snow,
Yet always let us hear the call
  Of sea-chicks peeping low.

Out the yellow beards all flew
  Of Matthew, Luke and John,
But Mark's flew longest of them all
  And was coloured like the dawn.

The fish took wing and played about
  Each opal sail and sang
Of goose-girls and the currant-fruits
  That on the bun-trees hang.

When flowers came above the waves
  We knew the port was nigh;
We could see a silver town
  Rising up hard by.

Down came our sails, each sailor bowed
And plucked his cap to me. . . .
'Twas day, and there my Mother stood,
The Lady of the Sea!

Robert P. Tristram Coffin

YOUNG AND OLD

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among:
God grant you find one face there,
You loved when all was young.

Charles Kingsley

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness or farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Alfred Tennyson

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

(*In Memory of Abraham Lincoln*)

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths — for you the shores acrowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Walt Whitman

REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie:
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you 'grave for me:
Here he lies where he long'd to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

Robert Louis Stevenson

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin?
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Georgiana Rossetti

NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew
Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar,
From their sand the conies creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram's bell ring 'neath an arch of stars,
'Rest, rest, and rest again.'

Walter De la Mare

STARS TO HITCH TO

IN AFTER DAYS

In after days when grasses high
O'ertop the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind's sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying — "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
In after days!

Austin Dobson

THE SONG OF HONOUR

I climbed a hill as light fell short,
And rooks came home in scramble sort,
And filled the trees and flapped and fought
And sang themselves to sleep;
An owl from nowhere with no sound
Swung by and soon was nowhere found,
I heard him calling half-way round,
Holloing loud and deep;
A pair of stars, faint pins of light,

Then many a star, sailed into sight,
And all the stars, the flower of night,
Were round me at a leap;
To tell how still the valleys lay
I heard a watchdog miles away,—
And bells of distant sheep.

I heard no more of bird or bell,
The mastiff in a slumber fell,
I stared into the sky,
As wondering men have always done
Since beauty and the stars were one
Though none so hard as I.
It seemed, so still the valleys were,
As if the whole world knelt at prayer,
Save me and me alone;
So pure and wide that silence was
I feared to bend a blade of grass,
And there I stood like stone.

There, sharp and sudden, there I heard—
Ah! some wild lovesick singing bird
Woke singing in the trees?
The nightingale and babble-wren
Were in the English greenwood then,
And you heard one of these?
The babble-wren and nightingale
Sang in the Abyssinian vale
That season of the year!
Yet, true enough, I heard them plain
I heard them both again, again,
As sharp and sweet and clear
As if the Abyssinian tree
Had thrust a bough across the sea,

Had thrust a bough across to me
With music for my ear!

I heard them both, and oh! I heard
The song of every singing bird
That sings beneath the sky,
And with the song of lark and wren
The song of mountains, moths and men
And seas and rainbows vie!
I heard the universal choir,
The Sons of Light, exalt their Sire
With universal song,
Earth's lowliest and loudest notes,
Her million times ten million throats
Exalt Him loud and long,
And lips and lungs and tongues of Grace
From every part and every place
Within the shining of His face,
The universal throng.

I heard the hymn of Being sound
From every well of honour found
In human sense and soul:
The song of poets when they write
The testament of Beauty sprite
Upon a flying scroll,
The song of painters, when they take
A burning brush for Beauty's sake
And limn her features whole —

The song of men divinely wise
Who look and see in starry skies
Not stars so much as robins' eyes,
And when these pale away,

Hear flocks of shiny Pleiades
Among the plums and apple trees
Sing in the summer day —

The song of all both high and low
To some blest vision true,
The song of beggars when they throw
The crust of pity all men owe
To hungry sparrows in the snow,
Old beggars hungry too —
The song of kings of kingdoms when
They rise, above their fortune, Men,
And crown themselves anew —

The song of courage, heart and will
And gladness in a fight,
Of men who face a hopeless hill
With sparkling and delight,
The bells and bells of song that ring
Round banners of a cause or king
From armies bleeding white —

The song of sailors every one
When monstrous tide and tempest run
At ships like bulls at red,
When stately ships are twirled and spun
Like whipping tops, and help there's none,
And mighty ships ten thousand ton
Go down like lumps of lead —
And song of fighters stern as they
At odds with fortune night and day,
Crammed up in cities grim and grey
As thick as bees in hives,
Hosannas of a lowly throng

Who sing unconscious of their song,
Whose lips are in their lives —

And crying loves and passions still
In every key from soft to shrill
And numbers never done,
Dog-loyalties to faith and friend,
And loves like Ruth's of old no end,
And intermission none —

And song — that song whose singers come
With old kind tales of pity from
The Great Compassion's lips,
That make the bells of Heaven to peal
Round pillows frosty with the feel
Of Death's cold finger tips —
The song of men all sorts and kinds,
As many tempers, moods and minds
As leaves are on a tree,
As many faiths and castes and creeds,
As many human bloods and breeds
As in the world may be;
The song of each and all who gaze
On Beauty in her naked blaze,
Or see her dimly in a haze,
Or get her light in fitful rays
And tiniest needles even,
The song of all not wholly dark,
Not wholly sunk in stupor stark
Too deep for groping Heaven —

And alleluias sweet and clear
And wild with beauty men mishear,
From choirs of song as near and dear

To Paradise as they,
The everlasting pipe and flute
Of wind and sea and bird and brute,
And lips deaf men imagine mute
In wood and stone and clay,
The music of a lion strong
That shakes a hill a whole night long,
A hill as loud as he,
The twitter of a mouse among
Melodious greenery,
The ruby's and the rainbow's song,
The nightingale's — all three,
The song of life that wells and flows
From every leopard, lark and rose
And everything that gleams or goes
Lack-lustre in the sea.

I heard it all, each, every note
Of every lung and tongue and throat,
Ay, every rhythm and rhyme
Of everything that lives and loves
And upward, ever upward moves
From lowly to sublime!
Earth's multitudinous Sons of Light,
I heard them lift their lyric might
With each and every charming sprite
That lit the sky that wondrous night
As far as eye could climb!

I heard it all, I heard the whole
Harmonious hymn of Being roll
Up through the chapel of my soul
And at the altar die,
And in the awful quiet then

Myself I heard, Amen, Amen,
Amen I heard me cry!
I heard it all and then although
I caught my flying senses, Oh,
A dizzy man was I!
I stood and stared; the sky was lit,
The sky was stars all over it,
I stood, I knew not why,
Without a wish, without a will,
I stood upon that silent hill
And stared into the sky until
My eyes were blind with stars and still
I stared into the sky.

Ralph Hodgson

FOURTH OF JULY ODE

I

Our fathers fought for Liberty,
They struggled long and well,
History of their deeds can tell —
But did they leave us free?

II

Are we free from vanity,
Free from pride, and free from self,
Free from love of power and pelf,
From everything that's beggarly?

III

Are we free from stubborn will,
From low hate and malice small,
From opinion's tyrant thrall?
Are none of us our own slaves still?

IV

Are we free to speak our thought,
To be happy, and be poor,
Free to enter Heaven's door,
To live and labor as we ought?

V

Are we then made free at last
From the fear of what men say,
Free to reverence To-day,
Free from the slavery of the Past?

VI

Our fathers fought for liberty,
They struggled long and well,
History of their deeds can tell —
But *ourselves* must set us free.

James Russell Lowell

SERVICE

(From *Pippa Passes*)

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work — God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?
Costs it more pain than this, ye call
A "great event," should come to pass,
Than that? Untwine me from the mass

Of deeds which make up life, one deed
Power shall fall short in or exceed!

Robert Browning

THE EXAMPLE

Here's an example from
  A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
  Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
  No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
  Small Butterfly;
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

W. H. Davies

HAPPY WIND

Oh, happy wind, how sweet
  Thy life must be!
The great, proud fields of gold
  Run after thee:
And here are flowers, with heads
  To nod and shake;
And dreaming butterflies
  To tease and wake.
Oh, happy wind, I say,
To be alive this day.

W. H. Davies

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

If in the eagle's track
Your sinews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

Elinor Wylie

IF —

If you can keep your head when all about you
  Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
  But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
  Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
  And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
  If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
  And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
  Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
  And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
  And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
  And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
  To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
  Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
  Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
  If all men count with you, but none too much:

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

PRIMER LESSON

Look out how you use proud words.
When you let proud words go, it is not
easy to call them back.
They wear long boots, hard boots;
they walk off proud; they can't
hear you calling —
Look out how you use proud words.

Carl Sandburg

HATE

My enemy came nigh,
And I
Stared fiercely in his face.
My lips went writhing back in a grimace,
And stern I watched him with a narrow eye.
Then, as I turned away, my enemy,
That bitter heart and savage, said to me:
"Some day, when this is past,
When all the arrows that we have are cast,
We may ask one another why we hate,
And fail to find a story to relate.
It may seem to us then a mystery
That we could hate each other."
Thus said he,
And did not turn away,

Waiting to hear what I might have to say,
But I fled quickly, fearing if I stayed
I might have kissed him as I would a maid.

James Stephens

TREE AND SKY[1]

Let my soul, a shining tree,
Silver branches lift towards thee,
Where on a hallowed winter's night
The clear-eyed angels may alight.

And if there should be tempests in
My spirit, let them surge like din
Of noble melodies at war;
With fervour of such blades of triumph as are
Flashed in white orisons of saints who go
On shafts of glory to the ecstasies they know.

Siegfried Sassoon

THE ENDURING

If the autumn ended
Ere the birds flew southward,
If in the cold with weary throats
They vainly strove to sing,
Winter would be eternal;
Leaf and bush and blossom
Would never once more riot
In the spring.

[1] By permission from *The Old Huntsman* by Siegfried Sassoon Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

If remembrance ended
When life and love are gathered,
If the world were not living
Long after one is gone,
Song would not ring, nor sorrow
Stand at the door in evening;
Life would vanish and slacken,
Men would be changed to stone.

But there will be autumn's bounty
Dropping upon our weariness,
There will be hopes unspoken
And joys to haunt us still;
There will be dawn and sunset
Though we have cast the world away,
And the leaves dancing
Over the hill.

John Gould Fletcher

WISHES FOR MY SON

Now, my son, is life for you,
And I wish you joy of it, —
Joy of power in all you do,
Deeper passion, better wit
Than I had who had enough,
Quicker life and length thereof,
More of every gift but love.

Love I have beyond all men,
Love that now you share with me —
What have I to wish you then
But that you be good and free,
And that God to you may give
Grace in stronger days to live?

For I wish you more than I
Ever knew of glorious deed,
Though no rapture passed me by
That an eager heart could heed,
Though I followed heights and sought
Things the sequel never brought.

Wild and perilous holy things
Flaming with a martyr's blood,
And the joy that laughs and sings
Where a foe must be withstood,
Joy of headlong happy chance
Leading on the battle dance.

But I found no enemy,
No man in a world of wrong,
That Christ's word of charity
Did not render clean and strong —
Who was I to judge my kind,
Blindest groper of the blind?

God to you may give the sight
And the clear, undoubting strength
Wars to knit for single right,
Freedom's war to knit at length,
And to win through wrath and strife,
To the sequel of my life.

But for you, so small and young,
Born on Saint Cecilia's Day,
I in more harmonious song
Now for nearer joys should pray —
Simpler joys: the natural growth
Of your childhood and your youth,
Courage, innocence, and truth:

These for you, so small and young,
In your hand and heart and tongue.

Thomas MacDonagh

THUNDERSTORMS

My mind has thunderstorms,
  That brood for heavy hours:
Until they rain me words,
  My thoughts are drooping flowers
And sulking, silent birds.

Yet come, dark thunderstorms,
  And brood your heavy hours;
For when you rain me words,
  My thoughts are dancing flowers
And joyful singing birds.

W. H. Davies

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like stars at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. Davies

THE TUFT OF FLOWERS

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been, — alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim over night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

Robert Frost

RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old —
  Lord of our far-flung battle line —
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
  Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies —
  The Captains and the Kings depart —
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
  An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away —
  On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
  Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power we loose
  Wild tongues that have not thee in awe —
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
  Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard —
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard.

For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!
Amen.

Rudyard Kipling

DUTY

When Duty comes a-knocking at your gate,
Welcome him in; for if you bid him wait,
He will depart only to come once more
And bring seven other duties to your door.

Edwin Markham

A PRAYER

Teach me, Father, how to go
Softly as the grasses grow;
Hush my soul to meet the shock
Of the wild world as a rock;
But my spirit, propt with power,
Make as simple as a flower.
Let the dry heart fill its cup,
Like a poppy looking up;
Let life lightly wear her crown,
Like a poppy looking down.

Teach me, Father, how to be
Kind and patient as a tree.
Joyfully the crickets croon
Under shady oak at noon;
Beetle, on his mission bent,
Tarries in that cooling tent.
Let me, also, cheer a spot,

Hidden field or garden grot —
Place where passing souls can rest
On the way and be their best.

Edwin Markham

GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,
Give me a field where the unmowed grass grows,
Give me an arbor, give me the trellised grape,
Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teaching content,
Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the stars,
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can walk undisturbed,
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman of whom I should never tire,
Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own ears only,
Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again, O Nature, your primal sanities!

Walt Whitman

CHRISTMAS CANDLES

NOËL

On a winter's night long time ago
(*The bells ring loud and the bells ring low*),
When high howled wind, and down fell snow
(Carillon, Carilla).
Saint Joseph he and Notre Dame,
Riding on an ass, full weary came
From Nazareth into Bethlehem.
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

And Bethlehem inn they stood before
(*The bells ring less and the bells ring more*),
The landlord bade them begone from his door
(Carillon, Carilla).
"Poor folk" (says he), "must lie where they may,
For the Duke of Jewry comes this way,
With all his train on a Christmas Day."
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

Poor folk that may my carol hear
(*The bells ring single and the bells ring clear*),
See! God's one child had hardest cheer!
(Carillon, Carilla).
Men grown hard on a Christmas morn;
The dumb beast by and a babe forlorn.
It was very, very cold when our Lord was born.
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

Now these were Jews as Jews must be
(*The bells ring merry and the bells ring free*),
But Christian men in a band are we
(Carillon, Carilla).

Empty we go, and ill-be-dight,
Singing Noël on a Winter's night.
Give us to sup by the warm firelight,
And the small child Jesus smile on you.

Hilaire Belloc

THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If some one said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel.

"In the lonely barton[1] by yonder coomb[2]
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

Thomas Hardy

[1] House or barn. [2] Valley.

BALLAD OF THE EPIPHANY

When Christ was born in Bethlehem,
  Pan left his Sussex Downs,
To see three kings go riding by,
  All in their robes and crowns;
And, as they went in royal state,
  Pan followed them, unseen,
Though tiny tufts of grass and flowers
  Showed where his feet had been.

And when to Bethlehem they came,
  Birds sang in every tree,
And Mary in the stable sat,
  With Jesus on her knee;
And while the oxen munched their hay,
  The kings with one accord
Placed gold and frankincense and myrrh
  Before their infant Lord.

And when Pan peeped upon the scene,
  The Christ-Child clapped His hands,
And chuckled with delight to see
  The god of pasture lands;
And Mary sang "*Magnificat*"
  Above the kneeling kings,
And angels circled overhead
  On rainbow-coloured wings.

And many a little singing bird
  Flew past the open door
To hop and chirrup in the straw
  Above the stable floor;

Wrens, robins, linnets, greenfinches,
And many another one,
Flew in to show good fellowship
With Mary's newborn Son.

Then Pan stood up and played his pipes
Beside the manger-bed,
And every little bird went near
And raised its faithful head;
And one, most beautiful to see,
A fair and milk-white dove,
Arose and hovered in the air
To testify its love.

But when the kings looked up to find
Who made the piping sound,
They only saw white lilies shine,
Fresh-gathered, on the ground,
And through the doorway, and beyond,
A shaggy wild goat leap;
And, in its gentle mother's arm,
The Baby fast asleep.

Charles Dalmon

KRISS KRINGLE

Just as the moon was fading amid her misty rings,
And every stocking was stuffed with childhood's precious things,
Old Kriss Kringle looked around, and saw on the elm-tree bough,
High-hung, an oriole's nest, silent and empty now.

"Quite like a stocking," he laughed, "pinned up there on the tree!

Little I thought the birds expected a present from me!"
Then old Kriss Kringle, who loves a joke as well as the best,
Dropped a handful of flakes in the oriole's empty nest.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

CHRISTMAS MORNING

If Bethlehem were here today,
Or this were very long ago,
There wouldn't be a winter time
Nor any cold or snow.

I'd run out through the garden gate,
And down along the pasture walk;
And off beside the cattle barns
I'd hear a kind of gentle talk.

I'd move the heavy iron chain
And pull away the wooden pin;
I'd push the door a little bit
And tiptoe very softly in.

The pigeons and the yellow hens
And all the cows would stand away;
Their eyes would open wide to see
A lady in the manger hay,
If this were very long ago
And Bethlehem were here today.

And Mother held my hand and smiled —
I mean the lady would — and she
Would take the woolly blankets off
Her little boy so I could see.

His shut-up eyes would be asleep,
And he would look just like our John,
And he would be all crumpled too,
And have a pinkish color on.

I'd watch his breath go in and out.
His little clothes would all be white.
I'd slip my finger in his hand
To feel how he could hold it tight.

And she would smile and say, "Take care,"
The mother, Mary, would, "Take care;"
And I would kiss his little hand
And touch his hair.

While Mary put the blankets back,
The gentle talk would soon begin.
And when I'd tiptoe softly out
I'd meet the wise men going in.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts

CHRISTMAS ISLAND [1]

Fringed with coral, floored with lava,
Three-score leagues to south of Java,
So is Christmas Island charted
By geographers blind-hearted,
— Just a dot, by their dull notion,
On the burning Indian Ocean;
Merely a refreshment station
For the birds in long migration;
Its pomegranates, custard-apples
That the dancing sunshine dapples,

[1] By permission from *Fairy Gold* by Katharine Lee Bates. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

Cocoanuts with milky hollows
Only feast wing-weary swallows
Or the tropic fowl there dwelling. . . .
Don't believe a word they're telling!
Christmas Island, though it seem land,
Is a floating bit of dreamland
Gone adrift from childhood, planted
By the winds with seeds enchanted,
Seeds of candied plum and cherry:
Here the Christmas Saints make merry.

Even saints must have vacation;
So they chose from all creation
As a change from iceberg castles
Hung with snow in loops and tassels,
Christmas Island for a summer
Residence. The earliest comer
Is our own saint, none diviner,
Santa Claus. His ocean-liner
Is a sleigh that's scudding fast.
Mistletoe climbs up the mast,
And the sail, so full of caper,
Is of tissue wrapping paper.
As he steers, he hums a carol;
But instead of fur apparel
Smudged with soot, he's spick and spandy
In white linen, dear old dandy.
With a Borealis sash on,
And a palm-leaf hat in fashion
Wreathed about with holly berry.
Welcome, Santa! Rest you merry!

Next, his chubby legs bestriding
Such a Yule-log, who comes riding

Overseas, the feast to dish up,
But — aha! — the boys' own bishop,
Good St. Nicholas! And listen!
Out of Denmark, old Jule-nissen,
Kindly goblin, bent, rheumatic,
In the milk-bowl set up attic
For his Christmas cheer, comes bobbing
Through the waves. He'll be hob-nobbing
With Knecht Clobes, Dutchman true,
Sailing in a wooden shoe.
When the sunset gold enamels
All the sea, three cloudy camels
Bear the King with stately paces,
Taking islands for oases,
While a star-boat brings Kriss Kringle.
Singing *Noël* as they mingle,
Drinking toasts in sunshine sherry!
How the Christmas Saints make merry!

While a gray contralto pigeon
Coos that loving is religion,
How they laugh and how they rollick,
How they fill the isle with frolic.
Up the Christmas Trees they clamber,
Lighting candles rose and amber,
Till the sudden moonbeams glisten.
Then all kneel but old Jule-nissen,
(Who, a heathen elf stiff-jointed,
Doffs his night-cap, red and pointed)
For within the moon's pale luster
They behold bright figures cluster;
Their adoring eyes look on a
Silver-throned serene Madonna,

With the Christ-Child, rosy sweeting,
Smiling to their loyal greeting.
Would that on this Holy Night
We might share such blissful sight,
— We might find a fairy ferry
To that isle where saints make merry!

Katherine Lee Bates

A CHRISTMAS FOLK-SONG

The little Jesus came to town;
The wind blew up, the wind blew down;
Out in the street the wind was bold;
Now who would house Him from the cold?

Then opened wide a stable door,
Fair were the rushes on the floor;
The Ox put forth a hornèd head:
"Come, little Lord, here make Thy bed."

Uprose the Sheep were folded near:
"Thou Lamb of God, come, enter here."
He entered there to rush and reed,
Who was the Lamb of God indeed.

The little Jesus came to town;
With ox and sheep He laid Him down;
Peace to the byre, peace to the fold,
For that they housed Him from the cold!

Lizette Woodworth Reese

CHOIR-BOYS ON CHRISTMAS EVE

"Then sleep, Thou little Child." Thus, sweet and high,
The choir-boys sang, on Christmas Eve when men,
With dim-lit manger and with lullaby,
Pretend that Jesus is a child again.
Like candles, flickering soft, their voices went,
Or any light which is not of the sun;
Like sound whose large vibrations have been spent,
Or pale-gold texture all too thinly spun.
A woman's voice without her joy and fear
The tiny boys wove sheerly to and fro —
No woman could have sung so light and clear
The crooning words which only women know.
Mary must wonder and, remembering, weep
To hear these babies sing Her Child to sleep.

Louise Townsend Nicholl

CHRISTMAS

A Boy was born at Bethlehem
  that knew the haunts of Galilee.
He wandered on Mount Lebanon,
  and learned to love each forest tree.

But I was born at Marlborough,
  and love the homely faces there;
and for all other men besides
  'tis little love I have to spare.

I should not mind to die for them,
  my own dear downs, my comrade true.
But that great heart of Bethlehem,
  he died for men he never knew.

And yet, I think, at Golgotha,
as Jesus' eyes were closed in death,
they saw with love most passionate
the village street of Nazareth.

E. Hilton Young

THE HOUSE OF CHRISTMAS

There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.
The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay their heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honour and high surprise;
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the Yule tale was begun.

A child in a foul stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,
But our hearts we lost — how long ago! —
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,
And strange the plain things are,
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings,
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome;
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.

G. K. Chesterton

THE HEROIC HEART

OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
A craven hung above the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel —
That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this
Blunt thing — ! " he snapt and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Edward Rowland Sill

COLUMBUS[1]

Behind him lay the grey Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores,
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone.
Brave Admiral, speak, what shall I say? "
"Why, say 'Sail on! sail on! and on! '"

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"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Admiral, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day,
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said,
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Admiral, speak and say"—
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
"This mad sea shows his teeth to-night.
He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
With lifted teeth, as if to bite!
Brave Admiral, say but one good word:
What shall we do when hope is gone?"
The words leapt like a leaping sword:
"Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,
And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
A light! a light! a light! a light!
It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.

He gained a world; he gave that world
  Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

Joaquin Miller

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

I

You know we French stormed Ratisbon;
  A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoleon
  Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
  Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
  Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
  That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader, Lannes,
  Waver at yonder wall," —
Out 'twixt the battery smokes there flew
  A rider, bound on bound,
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
  Until he reached the mound.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
  And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
  You hardly could suspect —
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
  Scarce any blood came through)

You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

IV

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace,
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed: his plans
Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes:
"You're wounded!" — "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said,
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling, the boy fell dead.

Robert Browning

ON A POET PATRIOT

His songs were a little phrase
Of eternal song,
Drowned in the harping of lays
More loud and long.

His deed was a single word,
Called out alone
In a night when no echo stirred
To laughter or moan.

But his songs new souls shall thrill,
The loud harps dumb,
And his deed the echoes fill
When the dawn is come.

Thomas MacDonagh

CLIMB

My shoes fall on the house-top that is so far beneath me,
I have hung my hat forever on the sharp church spire,
Now what shall seem the hill but a moment of surmounting,
The height but a place to dream of something higher!

Wings? Oh not for me, I need no other pinions
Than the beating of my heart within my breast;
Wings are for the dreamer with a bird-like longing,
Whose dreams come home at eventide to nest.

The timid folk beseech me, the wise ones warn me,
They say that I shall never grow to stand so high;
But I climb among the hills of cloud and follow vanished lightning,
I shall stand knee-deep in thunder with my head against the sky.

Tiptoe, at last, upon a pinnacle of sunset,
I shall greet the death-like evening with laughter from afar;
Nor tremble in the darkness nor shun the windy midnight,
For by the evening I shall be a star.

Winifred Welles

MEASURE ME, SKY!

Measure me, sky!
  Tell me I reach by a song
Nearer the stars;
  I have been little so long.

Weigh me, high wind!
  What will your wild scales record?
Profit of pain,
  Joy by the weight of a word.

Horizon, reach out!
  Catch at my hands, stretch me taut,
Rim of the world:
  Widen my eyes by a thought.

Sky, be my depth,
  Wind, be my width and my height,
World, my heart's span;
  Loneliness, wings for my flight!

Leonora Speyer

THE TRUMPET

Rise up, rise up,
And, as the trumpet blowing
Chases the dreams of men,
As the dawn glowing
The stars that left unlit
The land and water,
Rise up and scatter
The dew that covers

The print of last nights' lovers —
Scatter it, scatter it!

While you are listening
To the clear horn,
Forget, men, everything
On this earth newborn,
Except that it is lovelier
Than any mysteries.
Open your eyes to the air
That has washed the eyes of the stars
Through all the dewy night:
Up with the light,
To the old wars;
Arise, arise!

Edward Thomas

FOR THOSE WHO FAIL

"All honor to him who shall win the prize,"
The world has cried for a thousand years;
But to him who tries and who fails and dies,
I give great honor and glory and tears.

O great is the hero who wins a name,
But greater many and many a time
Some pale-faced fellow who dies in shame,
And lets God finish the thought sublime.

O great is the man with a sword undrawn,
And good is the man who refrains from wine;
But the man who fails and yet fights on,
Lo, he is the twin-brother of mine!

Joaquin Miller

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever Gods there be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced or cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade;
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll —
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

W. E. Henley

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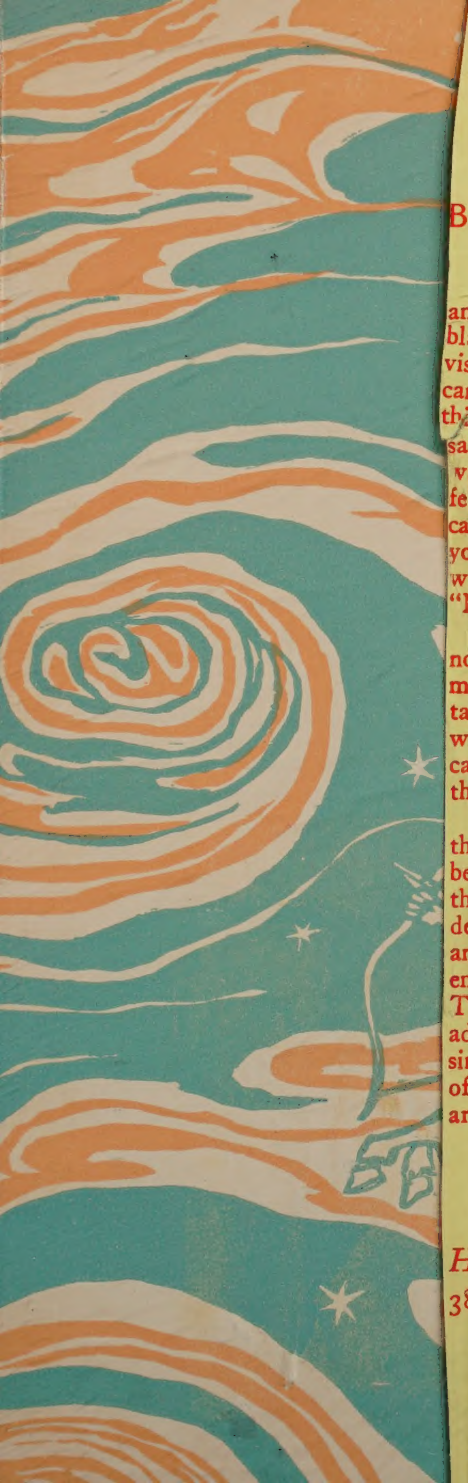

Stars to Steer By

BY LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Louis Untermeyer, with his young sons and one of their friends, sat in front of a blazing wood fire. Suddenly Martin, the visitor, burst out: "Sometimes I think I can't stand it, school, people, books—everything. It just doesn't make sense." "Well," said Louis Untermeyer, "we all feel that way one time or another. Every poet has felt it." "Oh, poetry!" said Martin. "I can't read it." "Maybe that's because you've never read the poems that were written for you," said Mr. Untermeyer. "Now, for instance—"

That was when this book started. It is not another anthology of poetry, although more than 150 poems are in it. It is a talking book, a book which was first talked with young people and in which poems became part of the talk. Poems illustrate the prose, and pictures illustrate the poetry.

It is more important than ever to know that beauty and wit and feeling have not been silenced by the despair and violence of the moment. Poetry has always been the deepest communication of human thought and feeling—a combination of idea and emotion which prose can never quite achieve. This communication, although written by adult poets, is equally for young people since it expresses so directly what they are often groping toward. That is why poems are stars to steer by.

Illustrated by Dorothy Bayley

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THIS SINGING WORLD

Modern Poems for Young People

Selected by

LOUIS UNTERMEYER

With illustrations by

FLORENCE WYMAN IVINS